



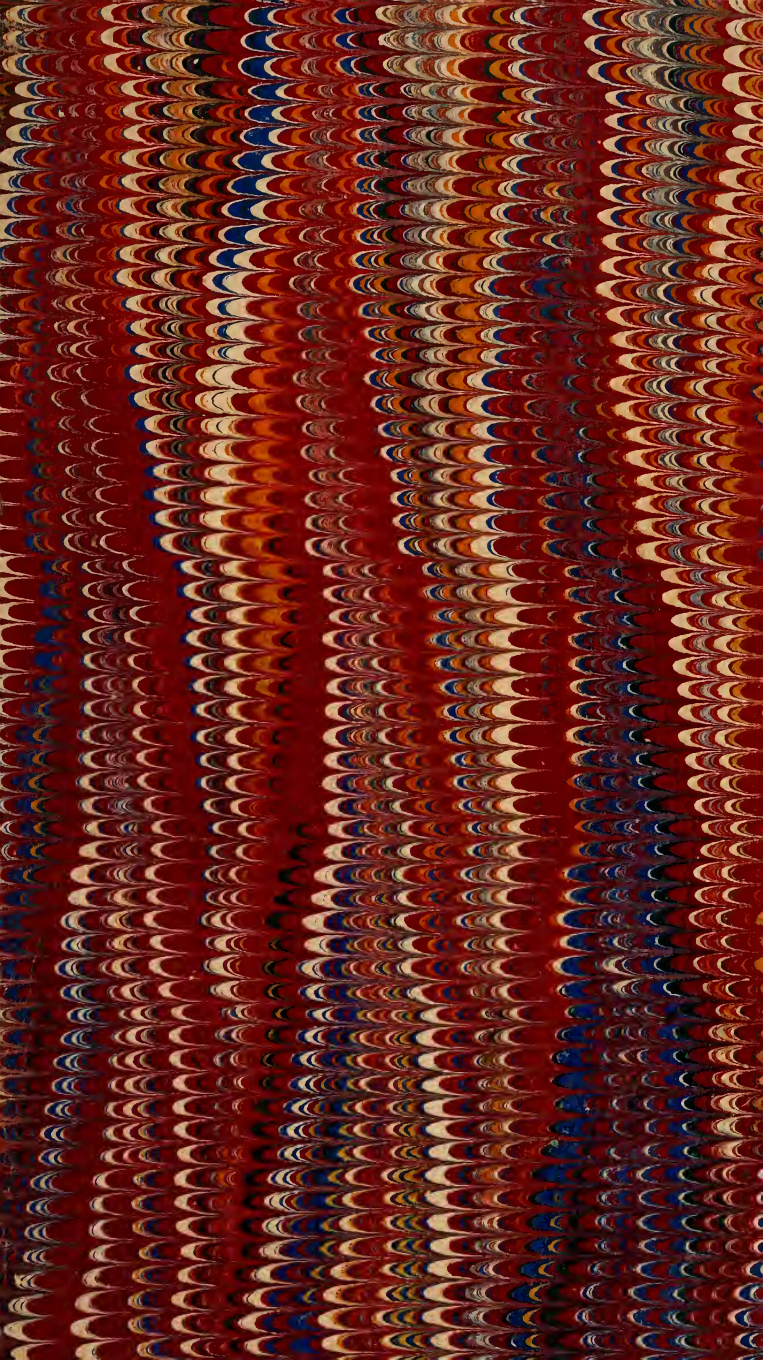
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



1

BIOGRAPHICAL,
LITERARY, AND PHILOSOPHICAL
ESSAYS:

CONTRIBUTED TO THE ECLECTIC REVIEW.

By JOHN FOSTER,

Author of Essays on "Decision of Character, Popular Ignorance, and
Christian Morals."

WITH AN INDEX OF THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS, PREPARED FOR THIS EDITION.



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P R E F A C E.

“THE Eclectic Review was commenced in January, 1805, by a number of gentlemen, of whom *William Alers Hankey* is believed to be the only survivor. Their object was to provide an antidote to the irreligious spirit which then pervaded the periodical press of the country. Episcopalians and dissenters were united in its early conduct; and for some years it maintained an absolute neutrality on those ecclesiastical points wherein they differ from each other. To such an extent was this neutrality observed, that some historical questions of general interest, and of great importance, were designedly avoided, lest they should lead to the expression of opinions which by implication might be deemed incompatible with it. An illustration of this is afforded in the review of *Macdiarmid's British Statesmen*, where Mr. Foster remarks, in reference to the lives of Strafford and Clarendon—

“ ‘ By the principles of our undertaking, we are pledged not to advance any opinions on the grand controversy between the religious establishment of our country and the dissenters from its communion ;—or more precisely, we are engaged to avoid discussing the abstract propriety of an establishment, and also the propriety of that form of it now existing in the country. These are questions, it is true, quite distinct from the *conduct* of the established church, or any of its distinguished members, as political agents in the transactions of a history. Viewed in this light, their operations, their influence, their virtues, or their vices, are just as fair subjects of observation as those of any other of the agents, involved in our national history. But it is not certain that we can exercise our right to this undoubted extent without giving considerable offence. Even at this liberal period, there are some whom it would be hard to avoid offending, and in whose opinions we should scarcely seem to preserve our pledged neutrality, while condemning the violent and fatal intolerance of the church during the reigns of the Jameses and Charleses, though it be evidently impossible to discuss the merits, or even to narrate the events of those reigns without it.’

“ It was however ultimately found impracticable to continue the compromise involved in the original constitu-

tion of the journal, and the Eclectic Review therefore became the avowed advocate of those principles of ecclesiastical polity which are held by the Congregationalists of this country.

“Mr. Foster’s connexion with the Review commenced in 1806, his first paper being published in the November number of that year. From that period to the close of 1818, he was a stated and frequent contributor; after which he remitted his labours in this direction, furnishing only thirteen papers from 1819 to 1828 inclusive. On the journal passing into the hands of the present editor, in January, 1837, he made application to Mr. Foster for literary assistance, and was authorized to announce him as one of the stated contributors to his work. The impaired condition of his health did not however permit him to do much. An occasional article was all which could be looked for, the fastidiousness of his taste concurring with the cause just named, to indispose him to frequent composition. His last contribution appeared in October, 1839.

“Writing to the Editor, January 28, 1841, Mr. Foster says: ‘With my want of memory, and miserable slowness in any sort of composition, I am very many degrees below the mark for any thing of material account—any thing requiring much reading, or laborious consideration. As

to long reading, my eyes have their veto ; and if I *had* read any considerable book, I should, when I closed it, be just in the plight of Nebuchadnezzar with his dream—*minus* the resource of having any one to call in as a substitute for Daniel.’

“The Editor has taken no liberty with his author save in the way of omission. He felt it to be incompatible with the reverence due to departed genius. Had these papers been reprinted during the life of their author, minor alterations would probably have been made, and some passages might possibly have been re-written. The loss of such revision, may be matter of regret, but we should condemn, as the height of presumption, any attempt on the part of another to supply its place. The productions of such a mind bear too distinctly the marks of their parentage to require the corrections of other men. The case is different with omissions. Many of Mr. Foster’s papers include large quotations from the works reviewed, the greater part of which has been excluded from the present reprint, with such connecting remarks as the extracts required. It has been the object of the editor to select what is of intrinsic worth ; and he has greatly erred in his judgment, if the contents of these volumes will not be deemed a valuable contribution to our sterling and permanent literature. As compared with the republished

papers of some eminent living reviewers, they may be wanting in that *finish* which their personal superintendence has secured to their productions; but in all the higher and more permanent qualities of intellect, in their largeness of view, penetrating subtlety of thought, deep insight into human nature, and sympathy with the nobler and more lofty forms of spiritual existence, they will be found eminently worthy of the genius of their author, and subservient to his permanent repute."

T. P.

* * * The foregoing Preface was written by Dr. PRICE, the present editor of the London Eclectic Review, for the work as issued by him in two octavo volumes, which contain *fifty-nine* of Mr. Foster's critical articles. As it was determined to commence the republication in this country with a portion only of those dissertations, sufficient to form a duodecimo volume, the twenty Essays which follow, were selected for the diversity and interest of the topics; their congeniality to American readers; and as exemplifying the mental and moral characteristics of their renowned author, the friend and associate of PARSONS, HALL, and JAY.

NEW-YORK, July 27, 1844.

ESSAYS,

BIOGRAPHICAL, LITERARY, AND PHILOSOPHICAL.

I.

CHALMERS'S ASTRONOMICAL DISCOURSES.

Discourses on the Christian Revelation viewed in Connexion with the Modern Astronomy. By THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., Minister of the Tron Church, Glasgow.

IF infidelity is so busily and zealously intent on its purpose, that no means of offence against Revelation can be too inconsiderable to be eagerly seized for the use of the warfare, it may be conceived what a value will be set on any reinforcements that can be obtained from the dignified resources of the sublimest science. If the pettiest quibbles, if witticisms, smart or dull, or the lying wonders of popery, or Chinese chronology, or the virtues of Mahomedans and Pagans, are all welcome for the array against Christianity, what proud exultation may well be felt at the view of any possibility of engaging "the stars in their courses to fight against" it!

Any possible result of this ambitious attempt, may be awaited by the believer in Christianity, with perfect tranquillity. He stands on a ground so independent of science, that nothing within the *possibility* of scientific speculation and discovery can essentially affect it. A train of miracles, attested in the most authoritative manner that is within the competence of history; the evidence afforded by prophecies fulfilled, that the author of Revelation is the being who sees into futurity; the manifestation, in revealed religion, of a super-human knowledge of the nature and condition of man; the adaptation of the remedial system to that condition; the incomparable excellence of the Christian morality; the analogy between the Works of God and what claims to be the Word of God;

and the interpositions with respect to the cause and the adherents of religion in the course of the Divine government on the earth :—this grand coincidence of verifications has not left the faith of the disciple of Christianity at the mercy of optics and geometry. He may calmly tell science to mind its own affairs, if it should presume, with pretensions to authority, to interfere with his religion.

He may content himself thus to repel the arrogance of science, when it intrudes in the spirit of a proud and inimical interference. But if, in a large and enlightened contemplation, it is found that science comes to be in harmony with religion, and even to subserve and magnify it, such tribute and alliance are by all means to be accepted. All wise men will protest against that feeling which some good men seem willing to entertain, as if the more limited and exclusive a thing religion could be made, the better ; a feeling which may have sometimes been heard to utter itself in expressions like these : “ Beware of losing your religion in those delusive vanities to which you give the denomination of enlarged views, sublime contemplations, and the like. What have we, or our religion, to do with the universe, or its fancied inhabitants ? The business of religion is the salvation of our souls ; and if we are duly attentive to that concern, we shall have no time or inclination for vain speculations about the economy of other worlds and races, about the moral condition of people in the stars.” It is easy to reply, by remarking, that the amazing fact, placed within the evidence of our senses, of the existence of a countless and inconceivable multitude of worlds, each of them of a magnitude to which ours is but an insignificant ball, cannot be thus lightly disposed of, but demands a sentiment corresponding to such a fact ; that, as one Being has created and sustains them all, they may rationally be conceived to constitute one system, in the sense of being formed and arranged on a scheme which combines them all in a relation to one another, in reference at least to an ultimate effect or object which they are co-operating to accomplish ; that, if any principles or illustrative phenomena of this grand union can be descried, they are obviously available for the loftiest purposes of religion ; that, whether they can or not, the amazing vision of the universe simply, in its mere mass and infinity of magnificence, tends mightily to exalt our conception of the Divinity ; and that, therefore, to affect to render so much the greater

homage to the principle and purpose of religion, in regarding the grandeur of the universe as quite foreign to it, would more justly incur the suspicion of contractedness of intellect, than claim to be regarded as a concentration of piety, too intent on the personal interest of religion to go so far abroad in imagination.

In this series of discourses, it appears to be quite as much the eloquent author's object to co-extend the truths and feelings of revealed religion, with the demonstrations and speculations of astronomy, to the utmost vastness of its field, thus at once giving the amplitude of the science to religion, and the sanctity of religion to the science,—as to defend religion against the objections attempted to be drawn from the discoveries of astronomy.*

* This topic, especially in this latter view, has been treated at considerable length, and with great ability, by the late Andrew Fuller, in a chapter entitled, *The Consistency of the Scripture Doctrine of Redemption with the modern opinion of the Magnitude of Creation*, in his book, *The Gospel its own Witness*. In that chapter are to be found, in a brief condensed form, several of the arguments and illustrations so ingeniously and splendidly amplified in the discourses of Dr. Chalmers, and it may be recommended to accompany the study of the Doctor's work. Very forcible in argument as that essay is, in parts it appears to us, nevertheless, to be marked with the characteristic defects of the strong and excellent writer,—a want of comprehensive expansion of thought, and an unwarranted positiveness in assumptions and inferences. Throughout the discussion, it is evident the writer has a most inefficient conception of the magnificence of the Universe. The idea does not in the least either elate or overwhelm his mind. There is no earnest, exulting, still confounded, still renewed endeavour to go out in contemplation of the stupendous and awful vision; no amazement or rapture at this manifestation of the immensity of the creating and sustaining power; no full impression of the demonstrated and almost infinite insignificance of this planet, as a material object. He admits, in terms marked by no emphasis, and betraying no delight, that there may be probability in the theory of "a multiplicity of worlds, inhabited by intelligent beings," but seems unwilling that probability should have its full effect, for he throws in, for the purpose of counteraction, the loose and not very pertinent remark that, "it is an opinion that has taken place of other opinions, which in their day were admired by the philosophical part of mankind as much as this is in ours."—Even setting aside the idea of inhabitants, and a moral economy of so many worlds, he no where uses language implying any thing at all approaching to a proper recognition of the plain facts and certainties of modern astronomy, as to the mere extent of the Creation. It may be suspected that he had a degree of horror of so vast a contemplation.

If we are correct in these remarks, it follows that the acute author was not well qualified for the discussion, since he could not be adequately

The first half of the performance, however, keeps in view the argument against Christianity, which “does not,” our au-

sensible of the extent of the difficulty, as arising from the stupendous magnitude of the Universe. For the extent of view that he takes, he reasons with great force, and some parts of his reasoning will justly apply to the subject in the amplest view in which it is possible to contemplate it; but in estimating the whole effect of the essay, we are constrained to feel that millions of worlds, or rather millions of systems of worlds, are not to be wielded by that kind of short straight-forward logic, by which the excellent author was so successful on some subjects.

His facility and confidence of assumption are shown in some most unqualified, unhesitating assertions, (in the way of interpretation of, or inference from, some passages of Scripture, of uncertain extent of meaning,) that the attention of the whole intelligent creation is occupied with the condition and salvation of the human race: and the assertions are made in that easy tone in which we pronounce an ordinary and unquestionable truth which involves no manner of difficulty.

It appears to us one of the most obvious characteristics of Mr. Fuller's mind, that he was but little sensible of the *mystery* of any subject, or of the difficulties arising in the view of its deep and remote relations,—or if we may use the fashionable term, bearings. To a certain extent, and that unquestionably a respectable one, he apprehended and reasoned with admirable clearness and force; and he could not, or would not, surmise that any thing of importance in the *rationale* of the subject extended beyond that compass: he made therefore his propositions, his deductions, his conclusions, quite in the tone of a complacent self-assurance of being perfectly master of the subject: while in fact the subject might involve wider and remoter considerations, not indeed easily reducible to the plain tangible predicaments of his rough, confined logic, but essential to a comprehensive speculation, and very possibly, of a nature to throw great dubiousness on the judgment which he had so decidedly formed, and positively pronounced, on a too contracted view of the subject.

The last paragraph but one of this essay, or section, affords a striking example of the cool confident facility with which this respectable author could sometimes dispose of the most mysterious and awful subjects, by the help of a false analogy. Observing that the final misery of the wicked is, as a part of the Divine Government, satisfactorily accounted for on the principle of the necessity of an example of justice, for the contemplation of God's other intelligent subjects, even though there should *not* be so many of them as to inhabit a multiplicity of worlds,—he adds, that nevertheless that part of the Divine Government is placed in a still more satisfactory light, if it be true that there is such a vast population of the universe, for that then the disproportion may be so much the greater between the number of the beings who eternally suffer, and the number of the other beings who are to benefit from those sufferings: insomuch that “to those who judge of things impartially, and upon an extensive scale, this final perdition will appear to contain no more of a disparagement to the government of the universe, than the execution of a murderer, once in a hundred years, would be to the government of a nation.”

It is very wonderful how so acute a writer should deem such a compari-

thor says, "occupy a very pre-eminent place in any of our Treatises of Infidelity, but is often met with in conversation ; and we have known it to be the cause of serious perplexity and alarm in minds anxious for the solid establishment of their religious faith."

"This argument involves in it an assertion and an inference. The assertion is, that Christianity is a religion which professes to be designed for the single benefit of our world : and the inference is, that God cannot be the Author of this religion, for he would not lavish on so insignificant a field such peculiar and such distinguishing attentions as are ascribed to him in the Old and New Testament."

To meet the objectors in the fullest, boldest manner, but also with the further and higher purpose, no doubt, of aiding the mind in its apprehension of that Spirit who is the sovereign possessor of all existence, the preacher commences with a magnificent view of the Modern Astronomy. Great indeed may well be the dismay of those religious persons who dread and detest being disturbed in the indolent quietude of their little homestead of thought, the narrow range of ideas which can be surveyed without an effort,—at hearing it demanded that the theory of religion be expanded to the compass of taking account of the Universe, a scene which, whatever may be its limits, is, as to the human power of comprehension, much the same as infinite, and demanded for the plain reason, that religion being the intellectual apprehension and the moral sentiment due to God, and this idea and sentiment being justly required to correspond to the whole of the manifestations which that Being has made of his glory, the lustre and immensity of

son adapted for a triumphant close of the discussion. How did he fail to perceive the enormous fallacy introduced by adding rare and momentary occurrence to diminutiveness of number ? how fail to perceive that any analogy must be infinitely absurd which should not include *perpetual* suffering, and that in the identical being ? The case indeed admitted of no analogy ; since no parallel representation could be made without introducing the impossible supposition of a mortal criminal, kept perpetually alive to undergo the pains of a perpetual execution.

In closing this note, we do not think it requisite to use many words in avowal of our high estimate of the intellect and the general energy of mind of the distinguished and lamented divine : who, indeed, has any *other* estimate ? But neither can there need any apology to even his warmest friends, for the expression of an opinion in which probably more than a few will coincide, that his writings are too often marked with an assumption, and an air of having perfectly disposed of the matter, which could barely be allowed in a mind of the very largest comprehension.

such manifestations, presented through the entire visible creation, place all that creation within the cognizance of religion : so that a religion which should decline to include these innumerable and far-off displays of Deity within its comprehension, in forming its conception of the attributes, the works, and the government of the Almighty, would therein choose to content itself with a less glorious idea of him, and to offer him a less sublime worship, than that Being has given us the means to form and to offer.

While, however, such a representation may be received ungraciously by minds that have never once surmised such a thing as an obligation enforced upon our religion, as to the extent of its contemplations, by the remotest stars discovered by the telescope, we are very confident that many serious but partially-cultivated persons, who have been impatient of the conscious narrowness of the scope of their religious ideas, will be greatly and devotionally benefited by this sublime introductory discourse of Dr. Chalmers.

In advancing into the regions of astronomy, in the spirit of religion, he takes both his text and his tone from a writer in whose mind the magnificence of the modern astronomy, could its wonders have been revealed to him, would have but inspired a so much the more exalted devotion.

"The Psalmist takes a still loftier flight. He leaves the world, and lifts his imagination to that mighty expanse which spreads above it and around it. He wings his way through space, and wanders in thought over its immeasurable regions. Instead of a dark and unpeopled solitude, he sees it crowded with splendour, and filled with the energy of the Divine presence. Creation rises in its immensity before him, and the world, with all which it inherits, shrinks into littleness at a contemplation so vast and so overpowering. He wonders that he is not overlooked amid the grandeur and the variety which are on every side of him ; and passing upward from the majesty of nature to the majesty of nature's Architect, he exclaims, 'What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?'

"There is much in the scenery of a nocturnal sky, to lift the soul to pious contemplation. That moon, and these stars, what are they ? They are detached from the world, and they lift you above it. You feel withdrawn from the earth, and rise in lofty abstraction above this little theatre of human passions and human anxieties. The mind abandons itself to reverie, and is transferred in the ecstasy of its thoughts, to distant and unexplored regions. It sees nature in the simplicity of her great elements, and it sees the God of nature invested with the high attributes of wisdom and majesty.

"But what can these lights be ? The curiosity of the human mind is insatiable, and the mechanism of these wonderful heavens, has, in all ages,

been its subject and its employment. It has been reserved for these latter times, to resolve this great and interesting question. The sublimest powers of philosophy have been called to the exercise, and astronomy may now be looked on as the most certain and best established of the sciences."

The rapid and comprehensive "Sketch," which is quite in the manner of a person familiar with the speculations and facts of astronomy; begins with the planets of our sun, and the philosophic divine illustrates the very strong probability of their being inhabited. He argues from their magnitude, and their several striking points of analogy to this world of ours. They have their movements on their own axes, their regular periodical revolutions round the sun, and their vicissitudes of seasons. Several of them have moons to alleviate the darkness of their night.

"We can see of one, that its surface rises into inequalities, that it swells into mountains and stretches into valleys; of another, that it is surrounded with an atmosphere which may support the respiration of animals; of a third, that clouds are formed and suspended over it, which may minister to it all the bloom and luxuriance of vegetation; and of a fourth, that a white colour spreads over its northern regions, as its winter advances, and that on the approach of summer this whiteness is dissipated—giving room to suppose, that the element of water abounds in it, that it rises by evaporation into its atmosphere, that it freezes upon the application of cold, that it is precipitated in the form of snow, that it covers the ground with a fleecy mantle, which melts away from the heat of a more vertical sun; and that other worlds bear a resemblance to our own in the same yearly round of beneficent and interesting changes."

We will acknowledge some little defect of sympathy with the delight which Dr. Chalmers expresses at the ascertainment of so very close an analogy as indicated in this last instance. Really this downright "fleecy" phenomenon of winter falls somewhat chilly on that animated visionary and half poetical idea, which we should have been better pleased to have been permitted to entertain of the physical condition of the inhabitants of these other worlds. This hemisphere of snow not only shuts down too much in the way of an extinguisher on that enchanting imagery of a local economy in which the imagination would have loved to place those unknown races of beings, and forcibly suggests ideas of dreariness, hardships, and even morbid physical affections, and hostility to life; it would also, as possibly or probably accompanied by these physical evils, seem too ominous of something much worse. The mind is forced to admit some fearful surmise of the too possible existence, in those worlds, of that horrible thing which has blasted the natural beauties and delights, and

mainly created the natural evils, of these terrestrial scenes. An analogy so very close to an order of elemental nature which in this world inflicts so much inconvenience and suffering, in which suffering, though immediately inflicted by the instrumentality of the elements, we have the effect of sin, must throw us on the ground of some abstracted moral considerations, to maintain our obstinate hope that this infernal plague has not invaded the people of those abodes.

The passage we have transcribed is followed by one in which, highly picturesque as it is, the doctor's elated imagination has carried him into a very palpable extravagance, in conjecturing such possibilities of improvement in the artificial subsidiaries to sight, as shall bring at last to our perception the green of the planetary vegetation, the dead wintry hue induced by its disappearance, the marks of cultivation extending over tracts previously wild, and even the cities forming the central seats of mighty empires. Were we obliged to go the whole length which analogy might seem to lead in shaping to our imaginations the economy of those regions, might we not reasonably be glad that such distinctness of detection as our author is willing to anticipate, is physically impossible, lest there should otherwise have been some danger of our having at length the mortification to descry such things as munitions of war, or idols' temples, or popish cathedrals?

There can be no scruple in assuming, a general principle, that it is in the highest degree improbable the Almighty Spirit should have constructed vast fabrics of Matter, to remain disconnected from Mind, as a conscious power to which those fabrics may be available for use. Useless to the Creator himself, they would be useless absolutely, if not serving to the purpose of the occupancy, and support, and activity, and contemplation, of sentient intelligent creatures. Prodigious orbs, disposed too in the order and movement of system, but thus desolate, and dead, and merely running vast circles in space, would really suggest something like the idea (we speak with reverence) of the Creator's amusing himself with an ingenious contrivance.—Any notion that the other planets of the solar system were created for the use of this earth, would be now too ridiculous for the grossest ignorance to dream.

When to this consideration, of the extreme improbability of immense conformations of matter being made to be devoid of the occupancy of mind, is added the whole account of the ascer-

tained points of analogy between the other planets and our own, we think that, excepting to minds repugnant to magnificent ideas, the probability that the other orbs of our system are inhabited worlds, must appear so great, that a direct revelation from heaven declaring the fact, would make but very little difference in our assurance of it.

Following the discoveries of science no further than the limits of this solar system, we behold them, says Dr. Chalmers,—"widening the empire of creation far beyond the limits which were formerly assigned to it. They give us to see that yon sun, throned in the centre of his planetary system, gives light, and warmth, and the vicissitude of seasons, to an extent of surface several hundreds of times greater than that of the earth which we inhabit. They lay open to us a number of worlds, rolling in their respective circles round this vast luminary—and prove that the ball which we tread upon, with all its mighty burden of oceans and continents, instead of being distinguished from the others, is among the least of them; and, from some of the more distant planets, would not occupy a visible point in the concave of their firmament. They let us know that though this mighty earth, with all its myriads of people, were to sink into annihilation, there are some worlds where an event so awful to us would be unnoticed and unknown, and others where it would be nothing more than the disappearance of a little star which had ceased from its twinkling."

But how humiliating it is to the proud ambition of the human faculties, that thus we are already almost overwhelmed with images of grandeur when we have hardly made a first step, hardly an infant's step, in that stupendous excursion to which the mind is summoned forth,—summoned, not by wild fancy or poetry, but by grave peremptory science, with a plain austerity as if in scorn that such a thing as poetry should have been suffered to pretend to a loftier sublimity than truth and fact. It is indeed most striking to observe how all the sublimities of imagination and invention dwindle and grow dim as placed in comparative measurement against the virtual infinity of the system of visible existence; as brought into the converging light of indefinite millions of suns. It is not only that this immensity of splendid material substance has, simply so contemplated, an overpowering magnificence, rendered inconceivably more august by the accession of the idea that intelligent beings in multitudes beyond all knowledge, or calculation, or conjecture, of any intelligence but One, dwell in the universe of daylight emanating from all these luminaries; the ultimate sublimity of all this glory of material existence is, that it gives the sign every where, through its immeasurable

extent, of the presence of another Existence. The mystery of a pure Spirit, infinite, and yet bearing no relation to place, so confounds the understanding, and something at least *analogous* to vast extension is so necessary to our conception of magnitude of being, that the mind is glad, in essaying to contemplate the greatness of the Divine Essence, to accept in aid *the effect* of boundless local extension, in the way of a distinct recognition of that Essence as present in one, and in another, and in each, and in all, of the material glories of an indefinite universe: and this it can in some measure do, or at least is beguiled to feel as if it could, without directly attributing to that Spirit a physical mode of extension from one part and one limit of the creation to another and the opposite. Thus the material universe, with all its splendours and magnitudes, ascertained, conjectured, or possible, may be regarded—not as a vehicle, not as an inhabited form, or a comprehending sphere, of the Sovereign Spirit, but as a type, which signifies, though by a faint, inadequate correspondence after all, that as great as the universe is in the material attributes of extension and splendour, so great is the Divine Being in the infinitely transcendent nature of spiritual existence. The least and narrowest idea to be entertained is, that *in this spiritual and transcendent mode* the predominating intelligence has the extension of the universe. What emphasis will such a view give to the sentence of the poet,

“An undevout astronomer is mad !”

And yet how seldom do we find the magnificent images of astronomy brightened into still nobler lustre by the spirit of piety which gives them so consecrated a character in the work of Dr. Chalmers.

From the solar system the inquiring contemplation is carried to those other countless luminaries, all shining from such an inconceivable distance. The preacher passes rapidly, and with a commanding reach of thought, over the most wonderful facts and speculations of the subject. The distance is the first of the facts which so defy human comprehension.

“If the whole planetary system were lighted up into a globe of fire, it would appear only a small lucid point from the nearest of the fixed stars. If a body were projected from the sun with the velocity of a cannon ball, it would take hundreds of thousands of years before it described that mighty interval which separates the nearest of them from our sun and our system. If this earth, which moves at more than the inconceivable velocity

of a million and a half miles a day, were to be hurried from its orbit, and to take the same rapid flight over this immense tract, it would not have arrived at the termination of its journey after taking all the time which has elapsed since the creation of the world. These are great numbers, and great calculations, and the mind feels its own impotency in attempting to grasp them. We can state them in words; we can exhibit them in figures; we can demonstrate them by the powers of a most rigid and infallible geometry. But no human fancy can summon up a lively or an adequate conception."

The immense magnitude, so demonstrated, of those stars; their shining with their own light; the "periodical variations of light" observed in some of them, as probable indication of a revolution, as in case of our own solar stars, on their axes; authorize a most undoubting assumption, (opposed by no argument, and confirmed by the consideration that so much the mightier is the display of the Creator's glory,) that they are all the central lights of so many systems.

As to their number, "the unassisted eye can take in a thousand, and the best telescope which the genius of man has constructed, can take in *eighty millions*." And nothing, as our author suggests, could be more irrational than to fancy that the utmost number of such luminaries comprised in the universe, may be just that number which the people of one of the planets of one of the suns, have, at a particular period of time, contrived optical instruments competent for descrying. Quite as reasonable would the assumption have been upon the discoveries by means of the first telescope that was made, as upon those of Herschel. When we reflect what kind of creature it is to whose view thus much of the universe has been disclosed,—that the physical organ of this very perception, is of such a nature that it might, in consequence of the extinction of life, be reduced to dust within a few short days after it had admitted rays from the stars; while, as to his mental part, he is, besides his moral debasement, at the very bottom of the gradation of probably innumerable millions of intellectual races (certainly at the bottom, since a being inferior to man in intellect, could not be rational)—when we think of this, it will appear utterly improbable that the portion of the universe which such a creature can take knowledge of, should be more than a very diminutive tract in the vast expansion of existence. And if the subject be considered in reference to the Supreme Originating Power, the probability becomes indefinitely stronger, that beyond the sphere of our perceptions, enlarged as it is by

artificial aids, there is all but infinitely more of material existence than there is within its compass. It being demonstrated by that vastness of material glory which is ascertained to exist, that magnitude and multitude were of the essence of the Creator's plan, we are well authorized in the assurance that the magnitude and the multitude must be on the most transcendent scale, a scale approaching as near toward a correspondence to the infinite supremacy of his own nature, as finiteness of one nature can (if we may be pardoned such expedients of expression) towards infiniteness of another. It is therefore but little to say, that the material creation is probably of such an extent that the greatest of created beings not only have never yet been able to survey it all, but never will to all eternity. For must it not be one great object in the Creator's design, that this magnitude should make a sublime and awful impression on his intelligent creatures? But if the magnitude is to make this impression, what would be the impression made on created spirits by their coming to the end, the boundary, of this magnitude? It is palpable that this latter impression must counteract the former. So that if the stupendous extension of the works of God was intended and adapted to promote, in the contemplations of the highest intelligences, an indefinitely glorious though still incompetent conception of the Divine infinity, the ascertaining of the limit, the distinct perception of the finiteness, of that manifestation of power, would tend with a dreadful force to repress and annihilate that conception; and it may well be imagined that if an exalted adoring spirit could ever in eternity find himself at that limit, the perception would inflict inconceivable horror.—In short, this is the subject on which it is purely impossible to be extravagant, in the way of simple amplification and aggravation of thought. And there is not the slightest transgression of sobriety in the language of our author, when he speaks of “those mighty tracts, which shoot far beyond what eye hath seen or the heart of man conceived—which sweep endlessly along, *and merge into an awful and mysterious infinity* ;”—or when he adopts the conjecture, in explanation of the *nebulae*, that the fixed stars,

—“instead of lying uniformly, and in a state of equi-distance from each other, are arranged into distinct clusters; that in the same manner as the distance of the nearest fixed stars, so inconceivably superior to our planets, from each other, marks the separation of the solar, so the distance of two contiguous clusters may be so inconceivably superior to the reciprocal distance of those fixed stars which belong to the same cluster, as to mark

an equally distinct separation of the clusters, and to constitute each of them an individual member of some higher and more extended arrangement."

—Or when, admonishing the philosopher against pride in the great discoveries of astronomy, he reminds him that there is

—"an unscaled barrier, beyond which no power either of eye or of telescope shall ever carry him; that on the other side there is a height, and a depth, and a length, and a breadth, to which the whole of this concave and visible firmament, dwindles into the insignificancy of an atom; and though all which the eye of man can take in, or his fancy grasp at, were swept away, there might still remain as ample a field over which the Divinity may expatiate, and which he may have peopled with innumerable worlds. If the whole visible creation were to disappear, it would leave a solitude behind it—but to the Infinite Mind, that can take in the whole system of nature, this solitude might be nothing, a small unoccupied point in that immensity which surrounds it, and which he may have filled with the wonders of his omnipotence. Though this earth were to be burned up, though the trumpet of its dissolution were sounded, though yon sky were to pass away as a scroll, and every visible glory which the finger of the Divinity has inscribed on it, were to be put out for ever—an event, so awful to us and to every world in our vicinity, by which so many suns would be extinguished, and so many varied scenes of life and of population would rush into forgetfulness—what is it in the high scale of the Almighty's workmanship? a mere shred, which, though scattered into nothing, would leave the universe of God one entire scene of greatness and of majesty."

We may be sure, as we have already suggested, that each of the elements of the manifestation of an Infinite Being, will do him justice thus far, that it will have a practical infiniteness relatively to the capacities of his intelligent creatures; that the utmost that will be permitted to the comprehension of these intelligences, will be the mere abstract truth that some of these elements cannot, from their very nature, be literally infinite; that their amazement will be eternally augmented by the very circumstance of this sublime enigma, of an element which must thus by its nature be limited, and yet leaves them all, through the eternity of their experiments and excursions, as far from any sensible approach to the verification of the limit, as at the first step they made into the mysterious expansion. But if we take our conjecture of the intellectual magnitude, and the probable excursive powers, of the highest of the created beings, from the consideration of the infinite power and beneficence of the Creator, and of what it is rationally probable that such a Being would create in the nature of mental existences, to admire, adore, and serve him, we shall be warrant-

ed to imagine beings to whom it may be possible exultingly to leave sun-beams far behind them in the rapidity of their career, from systems to systems still beyond. And if we add to the account the equal probability of a perpetual augmentation of their powers in a ratio correspondent to a magnitude already so stupendous, and crown it with the idea of an indefatigable exertion of those powers in discovery and contemplation of the Creator's manifestations through everlasting ages—there will then be required a universe to which all that the telescope has descried is but as an atom ; a universe of which it shall not be within the *possibilities* of any intelligence less than the infinite to know,

“ where rears the Terminating Pillar high
Its extramundane head.”

We need not dwell on the considerations, on the ground of which Dr. Chalmers insists it would be most absurd to disbelieve, absurd even to doubt, that this boundless multitude of worlds, this scene of almighty power and glory, is populous through all its systems with contemplators and worshippers of the Divinity.

If such a representation give, after all, but an infinitely feeble glimmer of the truth, respecting the magnitude of the creation, we may, in the name of both sense and piety, assume, with the utmost confidence, to repeat our reprehension of that mode of religious faith and sentiment, which would pretend to have so much the more of celestial light for excluding the beams of all the stars. *What* is it, we would ask, that comes upon us in those beams,—in the beams of those luminaries which are beheld by the naked eye, next of those countless myriads beheld by the assisted eye, and then of those infinite legions which can never be revealed to the earth, but are seen by an elevated imagination, and will perhaps burst with sudden and awful effulgence on the departed spirit ? *What* is it, but the pure unmingled reflection of Him who cannot be beheld in himself, who, present to all things, is yet in the darkness of infinite and eternal mystery, subsisting in an essence unparticipated, unapproached by gradation of other beings, impalpable to all speculation, refined beyond angelic perception, foreign from all analogy—but who condescends to become visible in the *effects* of his nature, in the lustre of his works ? And is it not, we ask again, one of the grand difficulties in religion, and one of the things most ardently to be

desired, to obtain a glorious idea of the Divinity, passing afar from that littleness and anthropomorphism which so confine and degrade our contemplations and devotions ? It cannot but be one of the plainest *duties* of religion, to aspire to the attainment of such an idea. And therefore a strong remonstrance may justly be directed to the *conscience* of a professed worshipper who cares not how little of the element of sublimity there may be in his conception of the adorable object,—who feels no *religious* mortification to think that the grandest idea of the Almighty which he does effectually realize in his mind, is in all probability prodigiously below what would be the true and full representative idea of one of the highest angels.

We have expatiated thus out of all proportion on the first part of this interesting volume, from a consideration of the unquestionable fact, that there is among serious persons a quite *irreligious* neglect of one of the two grand forms of divine revelation, the Word and the Works of the Almighty ; and that even among Christian teachers there is often a very unthinking and ill-discriminating mode of depreciating the latter, in the comparison ; a practice against which they might have been warned by observing the endless references in the Word of that Being to his Works ; and by observing how very often the Word rests the fulness of the meaning of its dictates and illustrations upon an adequate view of the Works. They might have been made aware to what a littleness of significance a thousand expressions in the Bible, relating to the Deity himself, are reduced by a want of extended and admiring ideas of the labours, if we may so express it, and the magnificent empire, of the Sovereign Spirit. They might have been taught to suspect that it must be a very doubtful Christian excellence to be but little in sympathy with those devout minds which, in the very condition and act of being the channels of divine communication to mankind, were so often elated at the view of suns and starry heavens, even at a period when the vision of those wonders was littleness itself in comparison of that magnificence to which science has now expanded it. Not, assuredly, that Christian teachers should become deep students in science, or lecturers on astronomy ; but the great elementary views of the universe are of easy attainment, and have a simplicity readily available for magnifying our contemplations, and our representations, of the divine majesty. We

trust Dr. Chalmers's work will prove in this respect of very eminent value and use to the religious public.

Such a view of the magnitude of the creation shows the inconceivable insignificance of this our world; insomuch that, according to our author's simile, its total annihilation would be no more sensible a loss to the universe, than the falling of a leaf into a stream which carries it away, with a destruction of all its multitude of microscopic animalculæ, would be to an ample forest. Such is the importance in the universe, of the globe which appears so wide a scene to its intelligent inhabitants, baffling by its long succession of region after region, the realizing power of their imagination;—the globe of which the most protracted journeying life would suffice but for the survey of a very small portion;—for the ascendancy over narrow sections of which, opposed millions have, through every age, been inflamed to mutual bloodshed and extermination;—for the acquisition of little specks of which, in an appropriation through a few fleeting years, innumerable individuals are at all times toiling with an ardour which merges all other interests;—of which, in short, its transient inhabitants are seeking to make a Heaven and a God. Such, relatively to the grand whole, is the importance of this orb, and of the creatures to whom it appears so immense and interesting an object. Truly, it was reserved for the Modern Astronomy to supply an adequate commentary on our author's text: "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

But here, instead of a humble and adoring gratitude that the Almighty *does*, nevertheless, visit man, in ways of marvellous condescension and benignity, there comes in the malignant suggestion, that our world being so trivial an object in the creation, it is absurd to imagine that the Being who presides over it all should give such attention to this atom of existence, as the Christian religion represents him to do, and therefore the religion that so represents cannot be true.

"Is it likely, says the infidel, that God would send his eternal Son, to die for the puny occupiers of so insignificant a province in the mighty field of his creation? Are we the befitting objects of so great and so signal an interposition? Does not the largeness of that field which astronomy lays open to the view of modern science, throw a suspicion over the truth of the gospel history; and how shall we reconcile the greatness of that wonderful movement which was made in heaven for the redemption of fallen man, with the comparative meanness and obscurity of our species?"

“Such a humble portion of the universe as ours, could never have been the object of such high and distinguishing attentions as Christianity has assigned to it. God would not have manifested himself in the flesh for the salvation of so paltry a world. The monarch of a whole continent would never move from his capital, and lay aside the splendour of royalty; and subject himself for months, or for years, to perils and poverty, and persecution; and take up his abode in some small islet of his dominions, which, though swallowed by an earthquake, could not be missed amid the glories of so wide an empire; and all this to gain the lost affections of a few families upon its surface.”

How little apprehension our author, as a Christian advocate, felt at meeting this objection, appears from the ambitious delight with which he has dilated the view of that grandeur of the Universe, on which the objection is founded. He proceeds to the argument for silencing it, in the Second Discourse, which commences with some striking observations on the imperfect community of feeling and of intellectual perception between human beings. These are made to bear on the character of Sir Isaac Newton, in the way of representing that the generality of even cultivated men are perfectly unapprized of, and incapable of adequately estimating, some of the most important circumstances in the agency of that philosopher's mind. They look at his brilliant discoveries, and admire, in a general way, the mighty force of genius and intellect so obviously manifested in them; but have no comprehension, and from the nature of the case can have none, of that absolutely sublime self-command and self-denial which accompanied, in continual exercise, the process which resulted in so vast an extension of the dominion of science. They cannot be aware what a course and what a magnitude of achievement it was, of self-emancipation from all pre-occupying systems and notions; of calm endurance of the hostility of those who could not be so emancipated; of repression of all temerity of speculation, that might have sprung from conscious power and success; of invincible coolness and persevering labour amid the dazzling disclosure of magnificent novelty; of resistance to all the beguilement of the splendid plausibilities which must often have presented their sudden fascinations to such a mind in such a career; in short, of incorruptible reason, which never lost sight of the tests of truth, nor failed to acknowledge submissively the limits to the range of the human intellect. An entire exemption from arrogance and presumption, and an invariable, inviolable fidelity to the

principle of admitting nothing but solid evidence as the foundation of any part of his theories, are described as the distinctive qualities of what may be called the moral government of Newton's intellectual powers and operations. With just indignation therefore our Author reprehends the ignorant arrogance of pretenders to philosophy, who, come into possession of Newton's grand discoveries, with an ease which might have precluded, but does not preclude, any indulgence of such an impertinent feeling as pride, avail themselves in the prosecution of other speculations, of these great conquests of science, in a spirit perfectly the reverse of that of the mighty thinker who made them: of which anti-philosophical, and anti-Newtonian spirit, one of the most remarkable samples is this argument against Christianity.

Dr. Chalmers exposes, with great force of aggravating illustrations, the total baselessness and extravagant arrogance of the assumption that the dispensation of the Messiah does in no manner involve or affect any other tribes of beings than the human race. It must be confessed that the matter is carried somewhat to the extreme in supposing, as a parallel case, such a hardly possible absurdity as that of a man's gravely delineating, on the ground of assumptions drawn from some general analogies among the planetary worlds, a scheme of a department of the natural history,—of the botany, for instance, of some of the planets, and proceeding to the length of theorizing on the moral temperament of their inhabitants. There is some trifle less temerity in hazarding negative general assertions, than in hazarding positive specific statements, respecting the unknown economy of other worlds. The parallel holds, however, in the essential point of absolute want of all evidence, and therefore of all reasonable ground for the assertions.

“How do infidels know that Christianity is set up for the single benefit of this earth and its inhabitants? How are they able to tell us that if you go to other planets the person and the religion of Jesus are there unknown? We challenge them to the proof of this said positive announcement of theirs. We see in this objection a glaring transgression on the spirit and the maxims of that very philosophy which they profess to idolize. They have made their argument against us out of an assertion which has positively no feet to rest upon—an assertion which they have no means whatever of verifying—an assertion, the truth or the falsehood of which can only be gathered out of some supernatural message, for it lies completely beyond the range of human observation.”

Those who raised the objection were aware that, to give it full effect, it was necessary the religion itself should be made accessary to its own intended humiliation ; that the Book professing to be a comprehensive revelation of its constitution, should be understood to avow, or most decidedly imply, that the pretended mediatorial economy of the Son of God, is limited exclusively to the human race. It was obvious that, unless this were understood, the hostile argument must, in every way, and in every part, be founded on a pure assumption. But it is curious to observe, how easily and unceremoniously this prerequisite fact was taken for granted ; and without, probably, one hour's impartial inquiry how the Bible does actually represent the matter, it was confidently affirmed, as a thing liable to no question, that the pretended dispensation of the Messiah is, by the import of its own declaration, restricted from any wider sphere than that of man and his interests.

Now, it is positively denied that the Scriptures make any such representation ; it is next asserted without contradiction, that no such information has come by any *other* superhuman communication ; and when it is added that there is nothing in the nature of the case to justify or countenance any such assumption, the infidel's asserted fact, from which he infers that Christianity is an imposture, is exploded away. The argument is the simplest and the shortest possible ; but it is amplified with great force of imagination by Dr. Chalmers, in a series of bold suggestions of what *may* be true, as to the extent of the Christian economy, for any thing the infidel can know to the contrary.

"For any thing he can tell" [and with this precise phrase are pointed a whole quiver of assailant sentences,—no less than ten in immediate succession] "sin has found its way into other worlds. For any thing he can tell, their people have banished themselves from communion with God. For any thing he can tell, many a visit has been made to each of them, on the subject of our common Christianity, by commissioned messengers from the throne of the Eternal," &c. &c. &c.

And is it not about as silly as it is arrogant, in these infidels, to affect to *dictate to religion what they choose it shall be*, that they may have the greater advantage against it ? It seems much of a piece with that memorable proceeding of certain of the fraternity, the decreeing death to be an eternal sleep,—which made just no difference at all in the real attributes of death, and made a difference but so much for the

worse in the feelings of whoever could, in such self-betraying folly and presumption, advance the more carelessly and confidently to the encounter with that formidable power. Neither death nor religion will consent to forego its qualities in obsequiousness to the arbitrary definitions of man; nor submit to the circumscription which it might be commodious to him to impose.

The advocate of Christianity, then, confidently repels the assumption of its enemies as to the limitation of its sphere; but at the same time he is hardly less confident in the assurance that even were the assumption conceded to them, and were it avowed by the Christian revelation that the economy therein declared, in terms importing so marvellous an intervention of Deity, does really concentrate all these glories of grace and power on man exclusively,—even then it could easily be shown that the notion of this being so immeasurably out of all proportion to the despicable insignificance of this spot of earth and its inhabitants, that it is irrational to believe it, is a notion betraying great narrowness of mind,—proud as its entertainers are of this fancied elevation of thought.

On this lower ground Dr. Chalmers powerfully maintains the argument in the third Discourse, “On the Extent of the Divine Condescension.” “Let us,” he says, “*admit* the assertion [of the confined scope of the Christian economy] and take a view of the reasoning which has been constructed upon it.” The exposure of this reasoning begins with the remark, (which expresses the essential principle and force of the whole refutation,) that this doctrine of disbelief arises entirely from the combined feebleness and arrogance of the conception entertained of the Deity. It is a conception which presumes to limit the powers of that Being, and which takes its authority to do so from the very fact of the demonstrated immensity of those powers. By practically demonstrating his ability to make and sustain a system so amazingly vast, he has demonstrated his *inability* to give a distinct and perfect attention to each part. We cannot comprehend the possibility of the combination or union of this immense generality, and this absolutely perfect particularity, of the exercise of intelligence and power,—and therefore it is impossible, even to the Supreme Mind. In other words, that Mind has been too ambitious of being the God of an indefinite multitude of worlds and races, to be a God, in the fulness and perfect exercise of the

divine attributes, to any one of them in particular. The exceedingly monstrous absurdity, as well as presumption, of thus inferring littleness from greatness, and on the very ground that that greatness is proved to be infinitely transcendent, is exhibited in its just character, and with just reprobation, in several powerful and eloquent passages, too long to be transcribed. Who can think of the subject without being confounded at the dire perversity of the human mind, that thus, instead of following forth the plain, rational indication afforded by the fact of infinite perfection evinced in one mode, to the delightful, and sublime, and adoring effect of attributing perfection in all modes, would choose to violate the clearest rules of sense in order to degrade and eclipse the glorious idea of the Divine Nature ;—as if to indemnify and avenge itself for the insignificance of its own !—God shall not in *every* way infinitely surpass man, and defy his comprehension. This is the principle, Dr. Chalmers says, of the kind of infidelity under consideration.

“To bring God to the level of our comprehension, we would clothe him in the impotency of a man. We would transfer to his wonderful mind all the imperfection of our own faculties. When we are taught by astronomy that he has millions of worlds to look after, and thus to add in one direction to the glories of his character, we take away from them in another, by saying that each of these worlds must be looked after imperfectly. The use that we make of a discovery that should heighten our every conception of God, and humble us into the sentiment that a Being of such mysterious elevation is to us unfathomable, is to sit in judgment over him, ay, and to pronounce such a judgment as degrades him, and keeps him down to the standard of our own paltry imagination ! We are introduced by modern science to a multitude of other suns and other systems ; and the perverse interpretation we put upon the fact that God *can* diffuse the benefits of his power and his goodness over such a variety of worlds, is that he *cannot*, or will not bestow so much goodness on one of those worlds, as a professed revelation from Heaven has announced to us.”

The argument might be authoritatively insisted upon, and without fear of rational contradiction, that the exercise of intelligence and power manifested to demonstration in maintaining the system of the amazing whole, does *necessarily* include a distinct attention to all the constituent parts, down to the minutest. For, in the most general and the simplest notion possible of that comprehensive exercise, we make it take distinct account of the great leading and immediate constituents or components of the system, with their relations and

adaptations ; but these have also *their* constituents, by means of which they are what they are in themselves, and what they are relatively to the whole system ; and then these again, these subordinates, have *their* constituents also, with their relations and adaptations ; and so downward in an indefinite gradation. Now, it is evident that, throughout this retiring series, the state or constitution of things at each further remove, must depend on the state or constitution of things at the next remoter condition of their existence ; and so onward, to that state of things, whatever it is, in which created existence has its essence and its primary constitution : so that the ultimate state of things, as appearing in a perfectly constituted universe, depends, through a long and continuously dependent gradation, on the nature and adaptations of their primary constituents. And how, therefore, can a given state of things in their ultimate constitution be secured without a certain condition of things being maintained in the primary mode of their existence ? And how can this be without the divine inspection and power being constantly exerted on them all in that, their original mode ?

But not to seek the aid of these subtleties :—It is immediately obvious that an incomparably more glorious idea is entertained of the Divinity, by conceiving of him as possessing a wisdom and a power competent, without an effort, to maintain an infinitely perfect inspection and regulation, distinctly, of all subsistences, even the minutest, comprehended in the universe, than by conceiving of him as only maintaining some kind of general superintendence of the system,—only general, because a perfect attention to all existences individually would be too much, it is deemed, for the capacity of even the Supreme Mind. And for the very reason that this would be the most glorious idea of him, it must be the true one. To say that we can, in the abstract, conceive of a magnitude of intelligence and power which would constitute the Deity, *if he possessed it*, a more glorious and adorable Being than he actually is, could be nothing less than flagrant impiety.

On even such general and *à priori* grounds the preacher is authorized to meet the infidel objection by the following position :

“ That God, in addition to the bare faculty of dwelling on a multiplicity of objects at one and the same time, has this faculty in such wonderful perfection, that he can attend as fully, and provide as richly, and

manifest all his attributes as illustriously, on every one of these objects, as if the rest had no existence, and no place whatever in his government or his thoughts."

But, he insists chiefly and wisely on the strong and accumulated *proofs of fact*, that the divine intelligence and energy are thus all-pervading and all-distinguishing. He appeals, in the first place, to the personal history of each of his hearers, and of each individual of the species, as most simple and perfect evidence that God is maintaining, literally without the smallest moment's intermission, an exercise of attention and power inconceivably minute, and complex, and as it were concentrated, on each unit. Each is conscious of a being totally distinct from all the rest; as absolutely self-centered and circumscribed an individual as if there were no other such being on earth. And thus distinct is each as an object of the divine attention, which in a perfect manner recognizes the infinite and to us mysterious difference between the greatest possible likeness and identity. But think of the prodigious multitude of these separate beings, each requiring and monopolizing a regard and action of the Divine Spirit perfectly distinct from that which each of all the others requires and engages. A mere perception of every one of the perhaps thousand millions of human beings,—a perception that should simply keep in view through every moment each individual as a separate object, and without distinguishing any particulars in the being or circumstances of that object,—would evince a magnitude and mode of intelligence quite overwhelming to reflect upon. But then consider, that each one of these distinct objects is itself what may justly be denominated a system, combined of matter and spirit, comprising a vast complexity of principles, elements, mechanism, capacities, processes, liabilities, and necessities. What an inconceivable kind and measure, or rather magnitude beyond all measure, of sagacity, and power, and vigilance, are required to preserve *one* such being in a state of safety, and health, and intellectual sanity! But then, while the fact is before us, that so many millions are every moment so preserved, and that during thousands of years the same economy has been maintained, and that not a mortal has the smallest surmise but that it can, with perfect ease, be maintained for ages to come,—the suggestion that all this is *too much* for the Almighty, never once obtruding itself to disturb any man's tranquillity—while there is before us the

practical illustration of a power combining such immense comprehension with such exquisite discrimination, how well it becomes our intellect and our humility to take upon us to decide *what* measure and manifestations of his attention such a Being may or may not confer upon one world, in a consistency of proportion with the attention which is to be perfect in its exercise on each and all!

The argument from the demonstrated perfect and continuous attention of the Divine Mind to objects comparatively insignificant, becomes indefinitely stronger when carried down to those forms of life which are brought to our knowledge by the utmost powers of the microscope. A doctrine or a disbelief founded on inference from one view of the works of God, must, to be rational, comport with the just inferences from every other. Yet those who justify their infidelity by the discoveries of the telescope, seem to have chosen to forget that there is another instrument, which has made hardly less wonderful discoveries in an opposite direction; discoveries authorizing an inference completely destructive of that made from the astronomical magnitudes. And it is very gratifying to see the lofty assumptions drawn, in a spirit as unphilosophical as irreligious, from remote systems and the immensity of the universe, and advanced against Christianity with an air of irresistible authority,—to see them encountered and annihilated by evidences sent forth from tribes and races of beings, of which innumerable millions might pass under the intensest look of the human eye imperceptible as empty space. No need, for the discomfiture of these assailants making war in the pomp of suns and systems, of any thing even “so gross as beetles,” or as the hornets, locusts, and flies, which were arrayed against the pagans of former ages and other regions. In all their pride they are “crushed before” less than “the moth,” beyond all conception less. Indeed the diminutiveness of the victorious confronters of infidel arrogance, is the grand principle of their power; insomuch that the further they decline in an attenuation apparently toward nothing, the greater is their efficiency for this controversy; and a might altogether incalculable and unlimited, for this holy service, resides in those beings of which it is no absurdity nor temerity to assume that myriads may inhabit an atom, itself too subtile for the perception of the eye of man.

Let a reflective man, when he stands in a garden, or a

meadow, or a forest, or on the margin of a pool, consider what there is within the circuit of a very few feet around him, and that too exposed to the light, and with no veil for concealment from his sight, but nevertheless invisible to him. It is *certain* that within that little space there are organized beings, each of marvellous construction, independent of the rest, and endowed with the mysterious principle of vitality, to the amount of a number which could not have been told by units if there could have been a man so employed from the time of Adam to this hour. Let him indulge for a moment the idea of such a perfect transformation of his faculties as that all this population should become visible to him, each and any individual being presented to his perception as a distinct object of which he could take the same full cognizance as he now can of the large living creatures around him. What a perfectly new world! What a stupendous crowd of sentient agents! What an utter solitude, in comparison, that world of living beings of which alone his senses had been competent to take any clear account before! And then let him consider, whether it be in his power, without plunging into gross absurdity, to form any other idea of the creation and separate subsistence of these beings, than that each of them is the distinct object of the attention and the power of that one Spirit in which all things subsist. Let him, lastly, extend the view to the width of the whole terrestrial field, of our mundane system, of the universe,—with the added thought how long such a creation has existed, and is to exist!

And now, with such a view of what that Spirit is doing, has been doing through an unimaginable lapse of ages, and may do through an unbounded futurity,—is it within the possibilities of human presumption and absurdity, vast as they are, to do any thing *more* presumptuous and absurd, than to pretend to decide beforehand what is beyond the competence of the power, or out of proportion for the benevolence of that Spirit? Yes, it *is* within those possibilities; for the presumption and absurdity may be inconceivably aggravated by that decision being made in express and intentional contradiction to a powerful combination of evidence, that he actually *has* done a given work of signal mercy to the human race.

The topic of the infinite multitude of beings impalpable and invisible from their minuteness, attesting, in every spot of the earth, a Divine care and energy indefatigably acting on each,

is vigorously illustrated and applied by our author, who considers the infidel objection as by this time fairly disposed of. It is hardly necessary to recapitulate ; but the argument stands briefly thus: No inference drawn from the stupendous extent and magnificence of the whole creation, is of the slightest authority, unless it consists with the inferences justly to be drawn from what we know of particular parts ; the antichristian inference drawn from that magnificent whole is decisively contradicted by the known facts in this particular part that we inhabit, which give such a demonstration of infinite greatness fixed in benevolent attention on indefinite littleness, while superintending the mighty aggregate of all things, as to leave no ground for a presumption that such an interposition as that affirmed by Christianity, implies too great a measure of Divine attention and action toward man, to be believed : therefore it may be believed, and authoritatively demands to be believed, *if it comes with due evidence of its own*. The whole object of the argument is to show that the ground is perfectly clear for that evidence to come with its full appropriate force: the statement of that evidence was no part of the author's object.

At the close of this argument, one or two considerations may deserve to be briefly adverted to. The infidels whose objection the Doctor is resisting, would never have thought of raising that objection as against that theory of Christianity which has in recent times assumed to itself, as its exclusive right, the distinction of "rational." And to professors of that system our author's whole effort of argument and eloquence appears, with the exception of the display of the Modern Astronomy, little better than a piece of splendid impertinence ; since there could be nothing very wonderful or mysterious in the circumstance of God's appointing and qualifying, among any race of his rational but fallible creatures, a succession of individuals, of the mere nature of that race, to be teachers of truth and patterns of moral excellence to the rest, and in distinguishing one of them by the endowment of a larger portion of light and virtue than any of the others. It is only against what we shall not hesitate to denominate the evangelical theory, which is founded on the doctrine of a divine incarnation and an atoning sacrifice, that the objection in question can be advanced with any serious force.

And this suggests another consideration. This being assumed as the true theory, a doubt may perhaps be raised,

whether the preacher's argument from the astonishing extent and distinctness of the attention and care exercised by the Deity on this most inconsiderable of his creatures, be available or strictly applicable ; whether there be any thing so analogous between the natural and providential economy and a dispensation so signally peculiar as that of redemption, as to admit of an argument from the evidence of the one to the probability of the other. The Doctor fully assumes this analogy.

For our feeble powers of contemplating the government of the Almighty, and for facility of proper instruction, there may be an advantage in our usual mode of viewing that government as distinguished into separate departments, as of nature, providence, and grace. But we should greatly doubt whether, in a higher contemplation, this notion of separate departments would not vanish away. For if, in the first place, we endeavour to elevate our thoughts to the divine nature, in contemplation of any of the attributes,—the power, for instance, or the goodness,—we cannot conceive of that attribute in any other way than as a perfectly *simple* quality, than, if we may presume to apply such an expression, a homogeneous element ; capable of an infinite diversity of modes of operation and degrees of manifestation, but not consisting of a combination of several distinguishable modes of the quality, each specifically applicable to a distinct department of the divine government.

If, in the next place, we descend to the view of this world as a scene of that government, we may, on a slight general inspection, seem to distinguish several departments so dissimilar to one another, as to have but a very partial relation or mutual dependence ; each existing as if chiefly for itself, and each requiring not only an appropriate mode of the operation of the divine power or goodness, but an appropriate modification in the attributes themselves ; and we shall speak accordingly, of the kingdom of nature, providence, and grace. But, if we think long, and comprehensively, and deeply, these artificial and arbitrary lines of demarcation will gradually melt from sight ; while instead of them there will become visible the grand lines of one vast system, lines running throughout it in all directions, evincing a perfect relation through all that we had regarded as almost independent parts ; or rather evincing a *unity* of economy, consisting of an infinity of particulars combined with divine art. And therefore, though some of these

particulars will appear prominent, by a richer lustre of the divine goodness, they will stand in an inseparable relation to all the other particulars in which that goodness is manifested, while all these other particulars stand in a contributive connexion, and a relative value, to those richest and best.

It must follow, that it is incorrect and absurd to say, that the striking manifestations of the divine power and goodness in a department of what we call the world of nature, are of an order so perfectly foreign to the principle of a certain other and far greater affirmed manifestation of those attributes, as to furnish no analogy by which to combat the objected improbability of that greater manifestation.

But suppose we place out of the argument, the marvellous evidences, revealed by the microscope, of the determination of the attributes of the Infinite Spirit to the most diminutive objects, and consider only the exquisite minuteness of their unremitting exercise towards man. *He*, at least, is a *system*, in which each part and circumstance is in strict relation to all the other parts and circumstances. Both from the nature of the case, and from numberless illustrations of fact, it is evident that the apparently slightest circumstances of his being and condition may have a vital connexion with the most important. There is no dis severing the human individual into independent portions, to be the subjects, respectively, of unconnected economies of divine government. It may be assumed that God does nothing for him purely and exclusively *as an animal*, but that his whole combined nature is kept in view in the divine management. The natural providence, if we may so call it, and the moral government, must be inseparably combined in one process, which cannot leave untouched the spiritual part. But then, it cannot be alleged that the astonishingly condescending and minute attention, which we see to be exercised by the Divine Being upon a thousand small particulars in the nature and condition of man, is an agency so foreign to the interests of his soul, that no inference can be drawn from it relative to the probability of the highest possible expedient adopted for those interests by that Being.

While, however, we think our author is perfectly warranted in the course of argument he has pursued, it is not to be denied that in a few instances he has, inadvertently, fallen into expressions which do injustice to the surpassing *degree* and the transcendent *mode* of the manifestation of the divine goodness

as given in the great expedient of redemption. The relation prevailing through all the agencies of the divine goodness, comports, it is unnecessary to say, with a stupendous superiority of degree in which that goodness is manifested in some parts of the government of the Almighty. One of the expressions we allude to occurs in the following passage :

“Let such a revelation tell me as much as it may of God letting himself down,” [this refers to the economy of Mediation] “for the benefit of one single province of his dominions, *this is no more than what I see lying scattered, in numberless examples, before me*; and running through the whole line of my recollections; *and meeting me in every walk of observation to which I can betake myself*; and, now that the microscope has unveiled the wonders of another region, I see strewed around me, with a profusion which baffles my every attempt to comprehend it, the evidence that there is no one portion of the universe of God too minute for his notice, or too humble for the visitations of his care.”—p. 116.

We have justly ascribed such expressions to “inadvertency,” for the Doctor loses no occasion for enforcing the glorious supremacy of the dispensation of Christ over the other illustrations of the divine benignity; nor can any terms be more animated than those which he has employed to this effect, in some passages of the discourse on the argument of which we have so very disproportionately enlarged.

The direct and conclusive argument against the infidel objection closes here. It rests its strength on indisputable matters of fact. And it leaves the infidel literally not an atom to stand upon; for it animates even atoms to an implacable hostility against him.

In drawing towards an end of our analysis of these Discourses, we think it may not be amiss to repeat that Dr. Chalmers uniformly recognizes the complete sufficiency of the evidences for Christianity, independently, altogether, of the questions which he is discussing: insomuch that that evidence would remain invincible if his whole argument were judged or proved to have failed;—that is to say, if it were judged or proved, in the first place, that the astonishing expenditure, shall we call it, by the exercise of the Divine Attributes upon the individuals of an inconceivable multitude of the most diminutive beings, and upon an inconceivable number of minute particulars and circumstances relating to man, (beings and circumstances so stupendously small as parts of the universal system), is *not* enough to furnish any argument against the improbability

of such an expedient for human happiness as that which revelation declares ;—and if it could be proved, in the next place, that this revealed economy of redemption disclaims any extension, or, at least, is silent as to any extension, of its relations and utilities to any other portion of the great system extraneous to the sphere of human existence.

Supposing the matter to be acknowledged to be thus, and supposing it to be then acknowledged, that we cannot understand how it can consist with the rules of proportion in the government of so vast a whole, for the Governor to do so great a thing for a most inconsiderable part,—this leaves the positive evidence in undiminished authority. This acknowledgment of ignorance amounts to this and no more,—that we cannot advance a certain philosophic argument, *à priori*, in corroboration of that evidence. The absence of that argument detracts not a particle from the arguments which are present, and on which alone the cause ever professed to rest its demonstration. This acknowledgment of ignorance is simply a confession that there is utter *mystery* on a side of the subject where it would have been gratifying to be able to find the means of raising a philosophic argument in favour of Christianity. And, verily, mystery, as relative to the human understanding, forms a marvellously pertinent allegation against an asserted and strongly evidenced fact in the Divine government of the universe !

The case is quite changed, if a man, instead of this acknowledgment of ignorance of the rule of proportion in that government, makes an avowal of knowledge ; if he says he can judge of that rule, and can see that the asserted fact in question is incompatible with it, and therefore must disbelieve that assertion, in contempt of all the alleged positive evidence. But we have then “ a short method ” with him. We have to tell him that he is to take the consequences of a flagrantly irreligious, if not unphilosophical presumption ; for that he *cannot* judge of that rule, and therefore it must be at his peril, that in the strength of his ignorant assumption to do so, he dares make light of that evidence.

Perhaps it was not strictly necessary to make these remarks at this length ; Dr. Chalmers has several times used expressions to preserve it clearly in the reader's recollection, that the Christian evidence is not to be implicated in any way of dependence, in the smallest degree, in a course of argument

which is purely subsidiary ; but it may not be impertinent to have marked the distinction in a somewhat more formal manner in the above sentences. That Christianity is in no possible degree committed to hazard upon the force or failure of the pleading, is the more necessary to be kept in view in reading the latter discourses in the series, because in them the author indulges in a train of speculation, supported in a great degree upon conjectures and a looser kind of analogies than those which have served him so well in the preceding part of the course ; conjectures, however, and analogies, which he does not mistake for certainties and direct proofs.

It might have been a sufficient service to Christianity, to make good the negative argument in its favour,—to show the futility of attempting to support against it a charge of being absurd and incredible, even though it did, by the necessary constitution of such an economy, and by avowals in its own professed revelation, confine itself exclusively to the interests of man. But the preacher concludes his Third Discourse with the assertion, that the vindication may be carried forward to a positive argument, confronting the infidel objection ; for that revelation avows, what reason might well surmise of such an economy, that it extends, in very important relations, to a much wider sphere, than that of the exclusive human interests. Accordingly, the Fourth Discourse proceeds to “ The knowledge of man’s moral history in the distant places of the Creation ;” and it is followed by another on “ The sympathy that is felt for man in the distant places of creation.” The wide sweep of reasoning and imagination over the distant regions of the moral world, terminates in the Sixth Discourse, “ On the contest for an ascendancy over man, amongst the higher orders of intelligence.”

With regard to the general object pursued through this latter part of the course, we shall acknowledge at once that we are extremely sceptical, while we do most willing justice to the ingenious argumentation, and picturesque illustration, and buoyant and soaring fancy, which the preacher has so largely displayed in his progress. On a cool consideration of the subject, it would seem that the scriptural grounds for supporting the speculation, are very slight ; and it may perhaps be suspected, that in the weight which our author rests on these, and in the degree of confidence with which he adduces arguments from analogy, and surmises of general probability, he may

have a little transgressed the rigid rules of speculation so justly applauded in the earlier discourses.

The Fourth and Fifth Discourses have for their texts,—“Which things angels desire to look into ;” and, “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.” No fact beyond the limits of our world is more prominent in the declarations of the Bible, than the existence of a high order of intelligences denominated angels. The equivocal and the lower application of the term in a number of instances can deduct nothing from the palpable evidence of the fact. But who and what are angels ? The effect of an assemblage of passages relating to them in the Bible, the descriptions, narratives, and allusions would seem to give an idea widely different from that of stationary residents in particular parts of the creation,—an idea, rather, of perpetual ministerial agency, in a diversified distribution of appointments, many of them occasional and temporary, in the fulfilment of which numbers of them visit or sojourn in this world. On the ground of analogy we may be allowed to surmise, that there may be spiritual ministers of this sublime order appointed to all other worlds in the creation. Now, as to the angels, that portion of them at least whose appointments have a relation to this world, there cannot be a moment’s question whether they are acquainted with the condition of man, and take an interest in the economy of God’s moral government over him. The Scriptures directly affirm it and in many ways imply it. But this proves nothing as to the knowledge or interest concerning man among the respective inhabitants of the distant parts of the creation. It is conceivable that there may be an indefinite reciprocation of intelligence among some of the angels commissioned to many regions of the universe, and they may, for any thing we can know, impart, in the scenes of their ministry, some portion of the intelligence thus reciprocated : on the contrary, they may maintain an inviolable silence. But, indeed, though this inter-communication of these diversely commissioned agents may be conceived possible to some extent, no notion can be entertained of its approaching to completeness and universality. This would be to attribute faculties too vast for created intelligences,—too vast, because commensurate, in each individual, with the whole creation of God, if there be such ministerial agents deputed to every part of that creation.

And however stupendously capacious their faculties might be, it is not conceivable that such a boundless diversity and multitude of contemplations and interests could consist with the devoted unremitting attention to the specific objects of their respective appointments.

Next, with regard to the *inhabitants*, properly so denominated, of the unnumbered millions of distinct worlds in the creation, (the truth of that theory being assumed,) there would seem to be insurmountable objections to the notion of their all receiving large information and feeling deep interest concerning the people and transactions of this planet. Let it be considered, that it is beyond all doubt that in every world where the Creator has placed intelligent beings, (we leave out of the account whatever region it may be to which the fallen angels are consigned,) he has made successive, diversified, and wonderful manifestations of his attributes in the peculiar economy of that world itself. It is not conceivable that he should not have made continually such disclosures of himself to them, carried on such a government over them, furnished so many proofs and monitions of their relation to him, summoned their powers so imperiously to the utmost service to him of which they are capable, that they will have, within their own peculiar sphere, copious interest and employment for their faculties during a large portion of their time. It is even reasonable to suppose that, be these distinct inhabited spheres as numerous as the most ambitious conjecture of an angel can make them, there have been, in the history of each one of them, without exception, some extraordinary and stupendous events and moral phenomena, standing in majestic pre-eminence for the contemplation of the inhabitants, and involving, as interventions of the Almighty, such glory, and miracle, and mystery, that "angels may desire to look into them." Why should it not be so? It plainly gives a loftier idea of that Being, that he should do such great things in all the worlds of his dominion, than that he should do them in only a few instances, or in only one, and that he should do them in an endless diversity of form and mode, than in only one. But if the fact should be so, consider what a countless multitude of things will deserve, perhaps equally deserve, as signal manifestations of the Divinity, to be brought within the view of those tribes of intelligent creatures, whose expanded faculties and exalted position render it possible for them to extend their adoring contemplations afar over

the dominions of God. It would follow, that their regards cannot be fixed on the economy of this world with so much of a concentration of attention and interest, as our author seems inclined to represent.

As to the conjecture that many, or that all the worlds of the creation may have a *direct* interest in the economy of redemption, as having, possibly, like our race, incurred the crime and calamity of a moral lapse, the preacher only throws it out as one among a variety of imaginative surmisings, and is evidently not desirous to make it the basis, or a part of any positive theory. We think it cannot be entertained for one moment. The most submissive humility on all subjects relating to the divine government, and its mysteries and possibilities, cannot preclude an irresistible impression that the idea of so wide a prevalence of evil in the universe, is absolutely incompatible with faith in the goodness of its Creator and Governor. Let any devout mind dwell awhile on the thought, and try whether it is not so. The prevalence of evil in only this one world, is an inexpressibly mysterious and awful fact; insomuch, that all attempts to explain *how* it is consistent with the perfect goodness of an Almighty Being, have left us in utter despair of any approach toward comprehending it. A pious spirit, not deluded by any of the vain and presumptuous theories of philosophical or theological explanation, while looking toward this unfathomable subject, can repose only in a general confidence that the dreadful fact, of the prevalence of evil in this planet, is in some unimaginable way combined with such relations, and such a state of the grand whole of the divine empire, that it is perfectly consistent with infinite goodness in Him that made and directs all things. But therefore this confidence cannot subsist on any supposition that the other regions of that empire, are also in any great proportion ravaged by this direful enemy and destroyer of happiness. On any such supposition, mystery changes into horror.

By the way, this topic supplies a mighty argument for that theory of an ample plurality of worlds of intelligent beings, so probable on philosophic grounds, and so consonant with sublime ideas of the Creator's power and glory. Unless we admit that theory, we assign to evil such a fearful proportion to the good in the condition of the intelligent creation, as to darken into intolerable gloom the collective view of its economy. How vast must the moral system be, to contain such a magni-

tude of good as to reduce this horrible mass of evil, existing and accumulating through thousands of years, to a mere circumstance, scarcely discernible as an exception to the estimate, that "all is good," merged and lost in the glory of the comprehensive whole !—Not, indeed, that by a reference to that unknown whole, we can in the smallest degree diminish the mystery of the existence of evil in this one world,—of its existence at all in the creation of an infinitely good and powerful Being ; but we do, in this idea of the immensity of that creation, obtain a ground for the assurance, that the proportion of good among the creatures of the Almighty, may all but infinitely transcend that of evil.

While we acknowledge that, for ourselves, we feel it necessary to entertain this idea of the immensity of the intelligent creation, in order to the full and consolatory effect of our faith in the goodness of the Supreme Being, we shall naturally wonder at the happier temperament of those theologians, if such there be, who meet with no very disquieting difficulty on this whole field of speculation ; who, while limiting their view of the intelligent creation to this world, (combined with the assemblages of angels and departed human spirits) and seeing in this world, through its whole duration hitherto, such a prevalence of moral evil, that they deem an immense majority of the race consigned to eternal destruction, can yet, by the aid of some superficial theory of human volition, and some lightly assumed and presumptuous maxims respecting penal example in the order of the divine government, escape, with great apparent facility, into great apparent complacency, from the overwhelming awfulness of the economy.

We should crave excuse for repetition while we try to select terms somewhat more precise, to say, that upon the theory of the immensity of the intelligent creation, we may take ground for the presumption that the rectitude and happiness, either absolutely perfect, or but slightly defective, of an inconceivable number of rational creatures, constitutes, over the vast general scene, a direct and infinitely clear manifestation of the Creator's goodness, leaving the solemn mystery, in this respect, to rest chiefly on this one small province of the universal dominion ; that presumption aiding our adoration, though it does not extenuate the gloom of this mystery as respecting this world considered exclusively.

But to return, for a moment, to the more immediate topics

of the Discourses. They glow with eloquent, poetical, striking representations of the earnest impassioned interest with which all the good beings, of even so stupendous a multitude of worlds, may be conceived to regard our race, as a family lapsed from their allegiance and their felicity, and under a dispensation of recovery. There is no pretending to know how much it is reasonable to conjecture on such a subject. A great deal of generous regard for the human race, may, with sobriety of imagination, be attributed to those ministers of the Almighty, who are charged with beneficent offices in the economy of this world. But when we think of the inhabitants of the universe, according to the computation all along maintained, or rather the theory, which defies all computation; when we consider that self-love must be the primary law of all created conscious existences, and that in all their localities and states this self-love will have its *immediate* sphere; when we seek to imagine a medium of announcement or representation by which our transactions and concerns should be vividly and protractedly impressed on the intellect and affections of the remotest foreigners of the creation; and when we reflect, according to what we have already suggested, that for the contemplation of those tribes or orders, whose faculties may be of a capacity to admit, and whose happiness may be made greatly to consist in their receiving, a sublimely enlarged knowledge of the creation, there will be an infinity of memorable and amazing facts of the divine government,—when we consider all this, we confess we cannot, without being haunted with an invincible sense of very great extravagance, listen to a strain of eloquence which would go to the length of representing all the wise and amiable intelligences of all the systems of the universe, as employing a large proportion of the energies of their being on the history and destiny of our race.

The grand argument for assuming such a concentration of attention and interest upon this world, is the extraordinary and transcendent nature of the expedient for human redemption. And well may that argument be urged to the extent of an assurance, that if the Blessed and Only Potentate wills that the most signal facts of his government in one world should be celebrated in others, this expedient must stand in the most eminent order of the facts so celebrated. But when that argument is pressed to so extreme a consequence, as in our

author's fervid conjectures and assumptions, one or two considerations will suggest themselves.

In the first place, there seems to be some inadvertency, common to him with many divines and pious men, in expressing the mode of apprehending the interposition of Deity, as manifested in the person of the Messiah. He sometimes falls into language which would do little less than imply that the Divine Nature, as subsisting in that mysterious connexion with the human, subjected itself to a temporary limitation, and, if we may apply such a term, monopoly, to that one purpose and agency of human redemption; as if Deity, so combined, contracted, and depressed itself from the state of Deity in the abstract, sustaining some suspension of the exercise of those infinite attributes which can be limited to no one object, or operation, or world, for one instant.—Not that any such limitation is *intended* so to be implied; but, under the defective effect of a language which bears a semblance of such an import, the argument in question (that from the pre-eminent marvellousness and benevolence of the expedient for redemption) is carried to an exaggerated conclusion. Of this deceptive character, we think, is the parallel which begins in page 150, between this great act of Divine interposition, and the supposed instance of a monarch of an extensive empire, who should, for a brief space of time, a few hours, or a day, (which would, as the author remarks, be infinitely longer in proportion to the whole time of his reign, than the duration of the mediatorial period on earth as compared with the eternity of the divine government,) lay aside the majesty and the concerns of his general government, to make a visit of compassion to the humble cottage of some distressed or guilty family. It is obvious that this illustration should imply (or the virtue of the parallel is lost) that “in turning him to our humble habitations,” (page 152) “the King, Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible,” (in these absolute terms of Divinity, the visitant is designated,) did in some manner withdraw and descend from the full amplitude of the glory and exercise of the unalienable attributes of Deity. But surely, whatever was the mode of that mysterious combination of the divine with an inferior nature, we are required religiously to beware of all approach toward such an idea as that of a *modification* of the Supreme nature, and to preserve the solemn idea of a Being, absolute, unalterable, and necessarily always in entire possession and exercise of all that consti-

tutes its supremacy and perfection. But the divine nature "manifested" in the human, in the person of the Messiah, continued then and ever in such an unlimited state of glory and action, that it might be then, and at every moment of the mediatorial dispensation, making innumerable other manifestations of itself, and performing infinite wonders of grace and power altogether foreign, are the remote scenes of their display, from this world and the interposition for its redemption; an interposition, which could in no manner interfere with any other interpositions, of a kind indefinitely dissimilar from it and one other, which the Sovereign Agent might will to effect in other regions.

Since, therefore, the inexplicable indwelling in the person of the Mediator, could in no manner affect the plenary presence and energy of the divine Nature, as while so indwelling, pervading also all the other realms of the universe; and since, while that mighty essence imparted immeasurable virtue to the mediatorial work and sacrifice, it yet could not sustain any difficulty, degradation, or injury;—as the griefs, the dreadful afflictions for the sin of the world, fell exclusively upon a subordinate being, belonging to our own economy;—there would not seem to be an imperious reason for the universality of the inhabitants of the creation to be occupied with a paramount interest in the transaction, though so illustrious a display of the Almighty's justice and mercy toward one section of his dominion.

In the next place, we would notice a still more striking inadvertency in our excellent author's representations. In maintaining the probability of the knowledge and celebration of the wonderful expedient for the redemption of man, far through the numberless abodes of intellectual existence, he indulges habitually a strain of descriptive sentiment which would be precisely applicable, *if* that economy were designed to be, or were in fact, redeemingly comprehensive of the whole world of men. But then, is it applicable, as the awful truth stands displayed before us? He keeps quite out of view what that divine intervention was *not* designed to accomplish, as made evident in the actual state in life, and after death, of a dread proportion of the human race; and forms his conceptions of the manner of interest with which innumerable pure and happy tribes of the universe may be imagined to contemplate our world, as if this reality of things should not be apparent to them.

It is too obvious how deeply this reality affects the ground of his sanguine and exulting presumptions of such an immensely extended interest and gratulation.

We should advert to those passages of Scripture which he has collected in page 147.

“ And while we, whose prospect reaches not beyond the narrow limits of the corner we occupy, look on the dealings of God in the world, as carrying in them all the insignificance of a provincial transaction ; God himself, whose eye reaches to places which our eye hath not seen, nor our ear heard of, neither hath it entered into our imagination to conceive, stamps a universality on the whole matter of the Christian salvation, by such revelations as the following :—That he is to gather together, in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him ;—and that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ;—and that by him God reconciled all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

We do not know where to seek a rule of interpretation for these passages, the most essential expressions of which—“ all things”—and “ things in heaven”—are among the most indefinite phrases in the Bible. It cannot be *proved* that their meaning does not comprehend more than such a portion of superhuman beings as may be placed within a circumscribed economy appropriate to our world—as some of the angels evidently are. But the circumstance which is fatal to every ambitious interpretation of them in their higher reference, is, the necessity of putting an exceedingly restricted one on them in their lower. How greatly less must be intended than the literal import of the expression, “ all things in earth,” is shown in the history and the actual and prospective state of the earth’s inhabitants.

We must not prolong a course of remarks in which we are sensible of having been unpardonably prolix, by commenting on the Discourse, “ On the contest for an ascendancy over man, among the higher orders of intelligence. The first part of it is employed, at rather perhaps too great a length for a printed work, in repetition and recapitulation ; but this might be highly proper in the discourse as delivered, at a considerable distance of time from the former ones in the series. The exhibition of the warfare is in a high tone of martial energy. And what cause we have to wish, as Dr. Chalmers did in an able sermon, published a few years since, that the spirit and splendour of oratory and poetry might, through a heaven-in-

flicted fatally, desert, henceforward, all attempted celebrations of any other warfare than that between the cause of God and the power of evil, as put forth in infernal or in human agency.

We have no disposition to accompany this portion of our ardent speculator's career, with exceptions to what we may deem its excesses of sentiment, and imagery, and confident conjecture. What we are most tempted to remark upon, in the description of the great contest carrying on between the intelligent powers of light and darkness, for domination over the destiny of man, is a something too much like an implication that this destiny can really be, in any possible measure, a depending question between created antagonists, or that it can appear to them, on either side, to be so, while both of them must be aware of the absolute certainty that the will of the Almighty is infinitely sovereign over all things. Indeed, this consideration renders it profoundly mysterious that there can be any contest at all. And to say that the existence of the contest is mysterious, is saying in effect, that it is impossible to attain a probable conception how the parties are actuated. The sense of this has always, with us, interfered with the interest of the former part of the *Paradise Lost*. There appears an enormous absurdity in the presumptions and calculations on which the delinquent spirits adopt and prosecute their enterprise; an absurdity, we mean, on the part of the poet, in making them to act from calculations, which it was absolutely impossible their enlarged understandings could entertain.

Nevertheless, we have the testimony, express and by diversified implications, of the Holy Scriptures, for the fact of a formidable moral dissension among the higher order of intelligences, in which the condition of the human race has been awfully involved.

The concluding Discourse is on a topic of very serious and melancholy interest,—the possibility to minds of feeling, and taste, and imagination, of being elated to noble contemplations, and affected by fine emotions, of a nature that shall seem to be intimately related to genuine piety, and may easily be mistaken for it, while yet the heart is destitute of all that is essential in the experience of religion. Nothing could be better judged than the placing of this subject in broad and prominent view at the close of such a train of contemplations. How possible is it that hundreds of readers may have expatiated in thought with emotions of sublime and delightful solemnity, on

the scene of astronomical magnificence displayed in the introductory Discourses ; and inasmuch as the glory of that scene is the glory of the Almighty Creator, may have deemed their emotions to partake of, or be identical with, religious devotion,—a sentiment and a state to which there were tests existing to convict them of being strangers. The preacher has forcibly illustrated, in many other forms, this treacherous semblance of religious vitality. And the feeling awakened at the view of so many interesting emotions, still useless, and by their deceptive influence, worse than useless, to the subjects of them, is so mournful, that the reader is almost impelled to relieve himself by seeking cause to think that some of the representations are over-wrought, and some of the decisions too severe ; and he is tempted to be gratified at obtaining an alleviation of the painful effect of some of the stern adjudgments, at the expense of the judge, whose occasional violences of oratory, and negligences of discrimination, afford a hint that his sentence cannot be without appeal. Much important and alarming truth, however, there is in this Discourse. It contains the *elements* of an eminently useful and warning instruction. But the subject requires a much more elaborate and definite discussion ; and we wish Dr. Chalmers may take another opportunity of treating it formally with the deliberate, best exertion of his mind.

On the merely literary character of his composition we shall content ourselves with a very few words. We cannot dissemble that we wish he would put his style under a strongly alterative discipline. No readers can be more sensible to its glow and richness of colouring, and its not unfrequent happy combinations of words ; but there is no denying that it is guilty of a rhetorical march, a sonorous pomp, a “ showy sameness ;” a want, therefore, of simplicity and flexibility ; withal, a perverse and provoking grotesqueness, a frequent descent, strikingly incongruous with the prevailing elatedness of tone, to the lowest colloquialism, and altogether an unpardonable license of strange phraseology. The number of uncouth, and fantastic, and we may fairly say barbarous phrases, that might be transcribed, is most unconscionable. Such a style needs a strong hand of reform ; and the writer may be assured it contains life and soul enough to endure the most unrelenting process of correction, the most compulsory trials to change its form, without hazard of extinguishing its spirit.

II.

JOHN HORNE TOOKE.

Memoirs of John Horne Tooke, interspersed with Original Documents. By ALEXANDER STEPHENS, Esq.

THAT eager desire which the decease of very distinguished men so commonly excites among the inquisitive part of the community, to obtain ample memoirs of their lives and illustrations of their opinions and characters, must have been greatly repressed with respect to the very extraordinary individual who is the subject of these volumes. There cannot but have been a very general conviction, that it was as much in vain to expect a really faithful history and impartial estimate of him as of Oliver Cromwell or the French Revolution. Even if such a book were to appear, it is probable it would have but few approving readers. In the minds of a very large proportion of reading Englishmen, the name of Horne Tooke awakens ideas of almost every thing hateful or dreadful in politics and morals. A more moderate class, though giving him some considerable credit for honesty of intention, and superiority to the lowest sort of self-interested motives—adopting too, to a limited extent, the principles on which he waged his political wars, and regarding him with something of that kindness which we are disposed to indulge toward men in adversity—feel nevertheless such disgust at some of the connexions in which he acted at some periods of his career, at the inconsistency of his character with his spiritual profession while he exercised it, and at that later licentiousness of which his irreligion tended to secure him from being ashamed, that they cannot with any complacency hear him praised, while they see and despise the injustice of that undiscerning and unmixed opprobrium with which they hear him abused. There may be a small party ready to make light of all his faults and vices, and to extol him as the mirror of integrity, an apostle of liber-

ty, a model of orators, a prince of philosophers.—Not one person, probably, of these different classes, will ever alter his opinion of this remarkable character. The subject is old, the impression has long been made and settled, and just according to that impression will the biographer's performance be pronounced upon, instead of the impression itself being changed by the biographer's representations.

Though we should be glad, certainly, that there *were* any chance of our ever obtaining, however unavailing it might be for rectifying public opinion, a perfect life of this extraordinary man—a work written by a contemporary, endowed with great sagacity, a rational lover of liberty, a zealous friend of learning, and a true disciple of Christianity, and privileged, if such a man could have been so, with a long personal acquaintance with his subject—yet we can make ourselves tolerably content under the certainty that such a work will never appear. The subject in question will not long continue to excite any considerable interest. There is a vast number of things the world can afford to forget. The train of events and of transiently conspicuous personages is passing on with such impetuous haste, and the crowd of interesting or portentous appearances is so multiplying in the prospect, that our attention is powerfully withdrawn from the past: and there is something almost melancholy in considering how soon men of so much figure, in their time, as Horne Tooke, and even his greater contemporaries, will be reduced to the diminished forms of what will be regarded with the indifference, almost, of remote history.

In the mean time, we might be tolerably satisfied with the information conveyed in the present work, if it were not so unconscionably loaded with needless matters. The author, though too favourable to his subject, is however much nearer to impartiality than probably any of the enemies of that subject will ever be, in recording the life, or commenting on the principles.

The work begins with the introduction of names which some ingenuity might be thought requisite to connect with the subject, if we were not aware that writing biography is an undertaking of such very questionable legitimacy, as to make it, in setting off, highly politic, in order to get fairly and unobstructed into the course, to stun and quell the prepared cavillers with the imposing sound of such names as Plutarch, Tacitus,

Bossuet, and "our own Bacon Lord Verulam."* Several pages are then employed on the subject, apparently, of showing that the rank to be assigned, in biography, to distinguish talents, should not depend on the aristocratic or plebeian descent of their possessor. The author manages this topic so laboriously as to excite some little suspicion that he would, after all, have been better pleased to tell that his subject, John Horne, was the son of a duke, than that he was the son of a poulterer in Newport Market. A paragraph like the following does not exemplify exactly the right way of effecting what it appears intended for.

"A tradition still exists in the family, that their ancestors possessed great wealth, and were settled on their own lands at no great distance from the metropolis. A more ingenious biographer, by a plausible reference to county histories, might have been able, perhaps, to have traced their origin to a pretty remote period, and, with a little reasonable conjecture, it would have been easy to have ascertained the loss of the patrimonial estates during the wars between the rival Roses. Or the industry of a modern genealogist might have contrived, from the identity of names, in addition to some trivial and incidental circumstances, to have shed the lustre of episcopacy on their race, and, by means of Dr. George Horne, Bishop of Norwich, reflected a borrowed renown on his new relatives. But such arts, even if allowable, are unnecessary here; for the grammarian, who forms the subject of the present volumes, is fairly entitled to be considered as a *noun substantive*, whose character and consequence might be impaired, rather than increased, by the addition of any unnecessary adjunct."

As to the latter of these supposed expedients for conferring adventitious consequence on that proud "substantive," we should have thought that no one who had been a personal observer of his moral temperament, could have entertained the idea, long enough to put it in words, of importance being added to him by even a real relationship to the Bishop of Norwich, without being rebuked by the image of that bitterly sarcastic look with which the said "substantive" would have heard any such suggestion.

He was born on the 25th of June, 1736. Whatever other reasons he might have for complacency in his parentage, there was one that could not fail to be always peculiarly gratifying to him. His father's premises were contiguous to those of Frederick, Prince of Wales, the father of the present King. The officers of the Prince's household thought it would be a

* When will writers learn to sweep their pages clear of idle expletives?

great convenience to them to have an outlet to the street through a certain wall which belonged to the poulterer. Without ceremony therefore they ordered a door-way to be broken in it, and paid no attention when he went to remonstrate. He at last boldly appealed to the law, and found its administration upright enough to defend him against the encroachment. Being, however, zealously attached to the house of Brunswick, he had no sooner obtained this decision than he handsomely gave the Prince the desired accommodation.

John, being a favourite and a boy of promise, was placed at Westminster school, and afterwards, for five or six years, at Eton; where, however, it has not been discovered that he gained any literary honours, or made any efforts to gain them. There are traces of evidence, nevertheless, of great prematurity. "On interrogating," says our author, "an old lady, with a view of discovering if any thing remarkable had occurred during his childhood, I happened to ask, whether she had known Mr. Horne Tooke when a boy." "No!" was the reply, "he never was a boy; with him there was no interval between childhood and age; he became a man all at once upon us!"

He is believed to have become a diligent student at college, where he passed several years; and whence he removed to undertake, to the great surprise and regret of his biographer, the office of usher in a school at Blackheath.

It was at the "earnest request of his father, who was a zealous member of the church of England, that he entered, at length, into holy orders, and was ordained a deacon. It was not till a subsequent period that he qualified himself for holding preferment by passing through the usual ceremonies incident to the priesthood." And in the interval between the two points in his progress, and after he had made a commencement as a curate, he entirely abandoned all clerical intentions, and determined to enter on the law.

At the Inns of Courts he had for contemporary students and familiar associates Dunning and Kenyon, the one of whom was afterwards to be his defender and the other his judge, but whose more prosperous fortunes of subsequent life could not then have been prognosticated on any ground of family, or talent, or literary attainment. In this last particular both are asserted to have been very greatly his inferiors. And, to judge of their command of money by their *almost* rival frugal-

ity, we may conclude they were all under an equal necessity of submitting to calculate their future successes solely on their abilities and exertions. In the point of frugality it should be mentioned that there was a small difference in favour of the individual who was so very eminent for that virtue in later life.

"I have been repeatedly assured, by Mr. Horne Tooke, that they were accustomed to dine together, during the vacation, at a little eating house, in the neighbourhood of Chancery-lane, for the sum of sevenpence half-penny each. 'As to Dunning and myself,' added he, 'we were generous, for we gave the girl who waited on us a penny a-piece; but Kenyon, who always knew the value of money, sometimes rewarded her with a halfpenny, and sometimes with a promise!'"

But in spite of his strong inclination to the law, the singular adaptedness of his powers for the most successful prosecution of it, this formal preparation for it, and this companionship with some of the most fortunate of its young proficient, Horne was the captive, beyond redemption, of another destiny.

"His family, which had never sanctioned this attachment," (to the law) "deemed the church far more eligible as a profession, and he was at length obliged to yield, notwithstanding his reluctance, to the admonitions, the entreaties, and the persuasions, of his parents. It seems not at all improbable that a friendly compromise took place on this occasion; and that an assurance was given of some permanent provision, in case he consented to relinquish his legal pursuits.

"Accordingly, in 1760, Mr. Horne was admitted a priest of the church of England, by Dr. John Thomas, Bishop of Sarum; and in the course of the same year he obtained the living of New Brentford, which was purchased for him by his father."—"It is said to have produced between £200 and £300 *per annum*. This income he enjoyed during eleven years, and in the course of that period he not only did duty at Brentford, but also preached in many of the churches of the metropolis."

In 1763, he was prevailed upon to become what he was accustomed to denominate a *bear-leader*, that is, the travelling tutor of a young gentleman. With a son of the famous Elwes he passed more than a year in France, with vastly higher gratification, no doubt, than any that could have been afforded by the occupations of a parish priest. It is not, however, to be understood that he scorned all the proprieties of his profession. We may transcribe without being bound to feel any great reverence for the biographer's judgment in theology, his account of Mr. Horne's clerical ministrations.

We need not remark on the extreme ignorance betrayed in

a passage which represents a man as avoiding controversial points, and keeping clear of mystery by—confining himself to “the truths contained in the Scriptures, and the received opinions of the Anglican church!”

But whatever may be thought of that portion of Horne’s services to his people which he performed under a solemn ecclesiastical obligation, he claims the most animated praise for what he did *beyond* the terms of this obligation. “He actually studied the healing art, for the express purpose of relieving the complaints of such as were unable to pay for the assistance of an apothecary. To attain this end he carefully studied the works of Boerhaave, and the best practical physicians of that day; and having learned to compound a few medicines, he formed a little dispensary at the parsonage-house, where he supplied the wants of his numerous and grateful patients.” It is added, that “he was accustomed, at times, to plume himself on the cures he had performed, and often observed, ‘that though physic was said to be a problematical art, he believed that his medical were far more efficacious than his spiritual labours.’”—Sufficient care, however, was taken that these occupations should not trench on the time and attention due to the “Rule and Exercise” of gentility and fashion. He was fond of gay company; and as some slight drawback from the praises earned in his theological and medical capacity, it is in the softest, gentlest form of blame acknowledged, “that he was, at one period, accused of being too fond of cards, and of spending too much of his time at ombre, quadrille, and whist.” The biographer did not think himself called upon to tell that the clergyman used to spend the Sunday afternoon in this canonical employment, with a preference, for honesty’s sake, of a room looking to the street, and with every kind of blind removed from the windows. But then what an excellent chance we have of knowing, from biographers, all that is material to an estimate of men’s characters. Friends will not make plain confessions of things which we know not whether we ought to believe when asserted in the accusations of enemies.

Our author observes that a man of Mr. Horne’s opinions might perhaps have been expected to “lean to the Dissenters,” on account of the more republican cast of their church economy, and their entertaining a spirit favourable to civil liberty. No. He deemed the gradation of ranks in the national

establishment well calculated for the production, as well as the reward, of "merit and virtue ;" and,

"Notwithstanding the charges afterwards adduced against him, on the score of orthodoxy, no one was *more violent against schismatics* of all descriptions." "Out of the pale of its faith" (that of the established church) "he never was very ready to admit of any ecclesiastical desert whatever." —Vol. i. p. 39.

Mr. Stephens could perhaps have explained on what theory of the subject the established church could have a strenuous advocate in an utter contemner of its creed. But that a man holding such notions concerning religion as Mr. Horne Tooke notoriously did, should be violent against schismatics, is one of the most scandalous inconsistencies in the whole records of human perversity. To think that a man so fierce (and surely we do not censure this animosity) against meanness, hypocrisy, time-serving, and treachery, could also find an object of antipathy and reprobation in that conscientiousness which would not dishonestly and treacherously profess and take the emolument of an adherence to a church, while seriously disapproving its tenets or institutions ! and that he could, the while, give himself all manner of credit for rectitude of judgment and moral feeling ! But it is thus that irreligion is very apt to become an occultation of common sense in matters where religion is concerned.

Possibly, however, there was somewhat more sense in this than may be obvious just at first sight. It would not be very strange if a man who rejects religion should be very desirous to obtain that sort of countenance to his rejection, which he would seem to receive from the character of those who professed to espouse it, while they were all found devoid of principle. He may therefore very naturally be vexed there should be men to prove by example that Christianity is a promoter of integrity of conduct.

Reverting to the biographer's assertion, that Mr. Horne Tooke thought the hierarchy "well calculated to incite to," as well as "reward, virtue and merit ;" we may very fairly make it a question whether we do not get nearer his real opinion in the following extract from a letter he wrote to Wilkes, from one of the stages of his first journey to France.

"You are entering into a correspondence with a parson, and I am greatly apprehensive lest that title should disgust ; but give me leave to

assure you I am not *ordained* a hypocrite. It is true I have suffered the infectious hand of a bishop to be waved over me; whose imposition, like the sop given to Judas, is only a signal for the devil to enter.

“I allow, that usually at that touch—‘*fugiunt pudor verumque, fidesque. In quorum subeunt locum fraudes, dolique, insidiaque,*’ &c. &c., but I hope I have escaped the contagion; and, if I have not, if you should at any time discover the BLACK spot under the tongue, pray kindly assist me to conquer the prejudices of education and profession.”—p. 76.

We have little doubt that this indelible record may be taken as the genuine expression of his estimate of the institution to which he belonged, and was always mortified to belong; and therefore as a measure of the honesty, the equity, and the decorum with which he could be “violent against schismatics.” He boldly declared there was nothing in this letter which he should be ashamed to have generally known, when he understood that the worthy friend to whom it had been addressed threatened to publish it, in revenge of some offence he had chosen to take at the writer. But nevertheless, he must have been excessively vexed at his own indiscretion, even though he had not entertained (it does not appear whether he ever did entertain) any ambitious designs on the higher stations in the church, designs to which the public disclosure of such sentiments would inevitably be fatal. He would be more mortified at being exhibited in this attitude of humiliation. A proud man, an able man, a learned man, and a knowing man, thus almost prostrate before such a piece of human nature as Wilkes! indignantly but impotently endeavouring to tear off his sacerdotal vestments; making a bitter but poor jest of ceremonies which he had been obliged to maintain the utmost gravity while undergoing; earnest to divert the anticipated sneer from himself to his fraternity and sacred vocation; eager to prove that though he *had* professed to be “moved by the Holy Ghost,” he was not, he really and in good faith was not, unworthy of the friendship of one of the most abandoned profligates on earth; entreating to be allowed to make a sacrifice of whatever in his education and chosen profession might be displeasing to this regent of doctrines and morals; and hoping to be at length, through his auspicious influence, redeemed from the degradation at least, if he could not be delivered from the fact, of being a priest!

His feelings with regard to his profession would be combined with many other sentiments to make him exult in the prospect of another travelling adventure, which was to extend

through the most interesting parts of France and Italy. He went again in the capacity of tutor to a young man of fortune. He left his canonicals at Dover, and "assumed the habit, appearance, and manners of a private gentleman." "Nor ought it to be omitted," says the biographer, "that, on both this and the former occasion, the young gentleman entrusted to his care, never once dreamed that he was under his inspection; but deemed himself honoured, as well as obliged, by the permission to accompany him in the capacity of a friend." Wilkes, in one of the letters in which the grand quarrel between the two friends was publicly fought out, alludes to Horne's residence in Italy, with strong intimations respecting his morals, and challenges him to venture a reference on that subject to an—"Italian gentleman now in London," a challenge which the clergyman does not notice in his reply.

However this may be, he seems, on his return, to have taken to the pulpit with a considerable degree of activity, and with a distinction which might soon have grown to popularity and celebrity.

"There is abundance of proof, indeed, that Mr. Horne was now considered an admirable preacher, and that his eloquence only wanted cultivation, to place him among the most successful of our English divines. But it was in orthodox and doctrinal discourses that he chiefly excelled, and he is accordingly reported to have distinguished himself greatly by his exhortations before confirmation, on which occasion, by mingling sound argument with kind and affectionate persuasion, he never failed to make a suitable impression on all who heard him. In short, he might not only have been greatly respected, as a popular pastor, but was still in a fair way to become one of the pillars of the Anglican church, when a memorable event occurred in the political world, and proved an insurmountable, though not, perhaps, an unexpected obstacle to his future preferment."

This event was the famous Middlesex election, in which the government was braved, encountered, and defeated by a daring mock patriot, of ruined fortune, obnoxious to the laws, and of infamous morals.

The leading facts of that transaction are sufficiently known. Wilkes, though he carried the election, was rejected by the House of Commons. He had the same success a second, third, fourth, and fifth time, in quick succession, and still met the same repulse. Colonel Luttrell was his opponent in the fifth election, and was declared duly elected, though he had only about a fourth part of the votes. It is stated that the

mob became so furious on this, that the Colonel would have lost his life but for the personal interposition of Mr. Horne, who rescued him and conducted him to a place of safety. Our author observes,

“This generous conduct must surely be allowed to have been worthy of applause ; but, such is the deadly enmity of political contests, that it rendered him ever after suspected by many of that party, and, on a future occasion, was frequently quoted against him as an indelible disgrace.”

Horne put forth the whole force of his mind in the preparation for this great contest, and in the management of it ; and to his able and indefatigable exertions the biographer mainly attributes the energy and success of the popular cause. His courage, which was of the coolest and firmest kind, shrunk from no hazard : his resources of argument and declamation were inexhaustible : his personal applications had every diversity of address and persuasion : his very moderate pecuniary means were freely devoted : and his measures and exertions to preserve good order, and prevent all violence, beyond that of language, on the popular side, proved how well he was qualified to manage the populace, and how much influence he must have previously acquired over their minds. This care to prevent violence was strongly contrasted with the conduct of the government party, who hired and embodied a gang of ruffians for the purpose of perpetrating it. In consequence, several unoffending persons were desperately wounded, and one man was killed. Horne's zeal and intrepidity were eminently displayed in his unsuccessful efforts to bring to justice the criminals in this and one or two other deeds of partly similar nature. Why such efforts should be unsuccessful, when those criminals were ascertained, it is not difficult to conjecture.

The share he took in this contest would be to him of the nature of an experiment on his own powers ; and the manner in which he had borne himself through so various and turbulent a warfare, would greatly confirm and augment his consciousness of extraordinary strength. While this would tend to impart a tone of provocation and defiance, the exercise of so ardent, and in his constant opinion, so virtuous an hostility, excited a passion for war which could not in a mind constituted of such “stern stuff” as his, become extinct as soon as the particular occasion was past. A heated piece of iron retains

its power to burn longer than slighter substances. The passion was prolonged in a keen watchfulness to find an enemy, and a fierce promptitude to attack him. When we add to this, that from his childhood his hatred had been directed against the sins of governments, we shall not wonder to find him, from the period in question, the unrelenting persecutor of statesmen, and their corruptions, and their adherents. Among the first objects of this inextinguishable spirit of war was a Right Honourable person of the name of Onslow, a member of administration, who was publicly called to account for an imputed delinquency in so peremptory a style, that he was provoked to make his ultimate answer by a prosecution. Horne, defeated at first, stoutly fought the matter through the courts to a third trial, in which he was completely victorious; and it was a victory over a much greater personage than his immediate antagonist, for he defeated Lord Mansfield, and in a manner so marked and decisive that it must have caused that personage extreme mortification. This was a proud commencement of that series of interviews which Horne was destined to have with his lordship, under the relation of judge and culprit, and might contribute not a little to his maintaining ever afterwards such an attitude of intrepidity and equality as no other man did, in the same relation, to the great despot of law.

There awaited him, however, a much more vexatious, and less eventually prosperous contest, in his public correspondence with Wilkes. It will depend on the various degrees of interest felt by readers about Horne's history and character to be grateful to the biographer, to forgive him, or to condemn him, for inserting nearly the whole of this correspondence, occupying about a *hundred and forty pages*. We profess to place ourselves, not without a very great effort, in the middle class of these three. We think a short analysis might have competently exhibited the merits of the question, and would have satisfied at least half of the readers of the work. If it was presumed that a considerable number would really wish for more, the entire correspondence might have been printed separately for their sake. But probably it is a better trade calculation to load every copy with the additional cost of this republished correspondence, than to sell the work for so much less, and leave it to the option of the purchasers to send also for this supplemental part.

It contains a great deal of able writing, but is so completely of a personal nature as that it would require the combatants to be of much greater historical importance to give it any permanent interest. It explains why they became virulent and implacable enemies, and exhibits a graceless picture of strong talent on the one side, and alert talent on the other, earnestly exerted and delighted to tear, and stab, and poison, and ready, apparently, to join in a most devout prayer to the nether world for more efficient implements of offence. Horne's letters are composed with a grave, intense argumentative acrimony. Wilkes's, with still more deadly rancour, are more volatile, satiric, affectedly careless, and captiously smart: they display the boldest impudence of depravity, with wit enough to render it both amusing and mischievous. In point of success, relatively to the main matters in dispute, there is no manner of comparison between the two. Horne's part of the correspondence, though it may not completely vindicate himself in all points, perfectly explodes his opponent to atoms. It proves this noisy demagogue, who scorned the people as much as he gulled them, and hated men in the proportion in which he had received any favours from them, was one of the most worthless articles ever put in the human figure. Nevertheless, it seems that, in general estimation, Wilkes was the victor.

We cannot comprehend on what ground "superior skill" is attributed to Wilkes in this conflict; nor should we have known where to seek a proof of his "more intimate knowledge of mankind," if something like such proof had not presented itself in the circumstance of his confidence, that he should be able to maintain himself in favour with the multitude in spite of those exposures by which his adversary probably expected, though perhaps with less confidence, to destroy his popularity. Indeed Horne did himself, a little while afterwards, almost acknowledge that his enemy was the more knowing man, when he said, in one of his letters to Junius, "I am sometimes half inclined to suspect that Mr. Wilkes has formed a truer judgment of mankind than I have." But really, in glancing through the controversy now, in the indifference of feeling with which matters so long past and comparatively unimportant are regarded, we think almost every reader will allow that Horne might, without forfeiting much of his high reputation for shrewdness and knowledge of the world, have presumed that his statements could not fail, at the least, greatly to

moderate the popular idolatry of his opponent. Unless they regarded the series of allegations as a string of absolute fabrications and falsehoods, and that too in spite of the evidence by which many of them would be substantiated, it is impossible to understand how the public could resist the conviction, that this champion of liberty and justice was destitute of conscience and shame ; that he was selfish and ravenous to the last possible excess ; that he cared for no public interest but so far as he could turn it to his own advantage ; that in virtue of his acting the patriot he arrogantly demanded, of a party of public-spirited men who were associated for political objects, to be supported, by subscriptions, in a sumptuous style of living, while his immense debts also were to be liquidated from the same source ; that he was indignant when any portion of the pecuniary liberality which had from the first been intended for more purposes than merely aids to him, was proposed to be applied to any one of those purposes, however urgent and important ; that he had thus become a burden and nuisance to his generous supporters, as intolerable as the magician or demon that fixed himself on the shoulders of Sinbad ; that his capacity and fame for daring exploits did not preclude the meanness that could descend to the most paltry tricks ; that, in short, the sooner the public cause could be totally severed from his interests and character, the better. To convince the people of the necessity of this separation, we can believe to have been really the leading object with Horne in this ferocious controversy ; though his own vindication and revenge came in, of course, for a considerable share of his concern.

Perhaps it is allowable to receive with some degree of scepticism Horne's declarations that he had *never* lent his aid to the mock patriot from any personal partiality to him, but always exclusively on public grounds ; having, he says, very early in their acquaintance, been led to conceive "an infinite contempt for the very name of Mr. Wilkes." If, however, he did, almost from the first, estimate the man at his true worth, we know not how it is possible to excuse him for being content, during so considerable a space of time, that the public cause should be identified with the character and interests of such a man. It is true that the man, however bad, had a just quarrel against the government ; the nation had also its just quarrel ; and the prosecution of both these quarrels coalesced

into one action. But it was of little consequence what became of so profligate and worthless a person : and one really should have been glad if the nation could have found any other possible means of asserting its rights, than by identifying those dignified and sacred objects, justice and liberty, with a compost of vices that proclaimed itself for their apostle and martyr. Doubtless it must be acknowledged that such a case would, to a man of public spirit, and at the same time refined and religious conscience, present a choice of two evils. It is, on the one hand, a great evil for a nation to suffer, for a year or a month, an infringement of any one of its rights. It is a very great evil, on the other hand, that the most momentous national interests and political principles should, in order to their being defensively maintained, be suffered to be, as it were, personated by a character that will throw and fasten upon them all the associations of vice and dishonour, a character strongly tending to give the scrupulous and the virtuous a loathing of politics and almost a disaffection to the very name of liberty, and to supply the advocates of arbitrary and slavish principles with a topic, or rather a whole volume of topics, by which to give their children, their neighbours, and their countrymen, a degraded representation of the doctrines of liberty.—Either Horne or Junius, we really forget which, somewhere says, that if the very devil himself could be supposed to put himself in the place of advocate and vindicator of some point of justice, he ought to be, so far, supported. We cannot agree to this, for the simple reason, that the just cause would ultimately suffer greater injury by the dishonour it would contract, in the general estimation of mankind, from the character of its vindicator, than probably it would suffer from the wrong against which it would be vindicated. It must be a case of a most perilous urgency indeed if it will not be more politic to wait a while, and ransack the whole nation for an honest man to be put to the service, rather than employ an agent, whose qualities make even ourselves sometimes sick of the very business in the prosecution of which we support him.

The power of an infamous character to defile and depreciate whatever is associated with it, was exemplified in the case of Horne himself, in the permanent injury which his moral and political reputation sustained from his temporary connexion and co-operation with Wilkes. Whether he was aware of it or not, the fact was, that the suspicious and undervaluing esti-

mate, we may say in plain terms the bad opinion, entertained of him throughout the sequel of his political life, by the more moral and cautious part of society, was in no small degree owing to this association. His declarations were perhaps accompanied by evidence enough to entitle them to credit, that his co-operation had been exclusively for public interests, and not a step beyond what he thought those interests demanded. He rendered some unquestionable services to public justice and popular rights. He gave uncommon proofs of disinterestedness, at least of superiority to all the sordid kinds of self-interest. He was free from some of Wilkes's vices. But all this was unavailing. The stain was indelible. And the fatal mischief thus done to his character extended to his political doctrines : insomuch that they had the less chance of being listened to with candour and respect, and of convincing in proportion to the force of argument, as they came from him ;—and others taught them with less success because he taught them too.

There was, however, as we have already noticed, a short season of fermentation in the public mind, during which he suffered the most violent opprobrium, not for having co-operated with Wilkes, but for having renounced the connexion, clearly not with any desertion of principles or public objects, but for the very sake of those principles and objects. We do not wonder that we find him afterwards rating popular favour very low, and uniformly holding forth, that, if he had not stronger and better motives than any wish to obtain it, he should be a fool to undergo any more political toils, or expose himself to any more political dangers. To be sure one does think very meanly of whatever portion of the popular mind could be enthusiastic for Wilkes after Horne's plain statements of facts concerning him ; but the most scandalous thing of all was that *Junius*, whatever he might have a right to think of Horne's integrity, should make light of the facts proving the utter want of it in Wilkes. If that mysterious personage had been universally accepted as the oracle of morality, we should, by this time, have been sunk even much deeper than we are, in that political corruption which raised so great a tempest of his indignation. He *might* perhaps have contrived to keep on some decent terms with morals, in attempting to maintain that the national politics were in such a crisis as to reduce the people to the alternative of supporting, to every length, a very bad

man, or surrendering their own rights for ever,—had he, withal, expressed the strongest reprobation of the man's profligacy, and deplored this wretched necessity of "rallying round" so worthless a principal. But instead of such a proceeding, we behold this austere censor flinging away with scorn a grave indictment which proved the incurable depravity and worthlessness of the person in question, and railing at the equal folly and malice that could pretend to make the man's personal vices a disqualification for the office of champion of public justice.

The whole correspondence between Horne and Junius is inserted, though it is to be found in every copy of Junius, that is, in the hands of almost every reading person in the country. This is a glaring specimen of book-making assurance.

There is, we suppose, a general agreement of opinion with the biographer, that Horne had decidedly the advantage in the substantial matters in dispute, that is, the merits of himself and Wilkes; while as to Junius, there could not well be a stronger testimony to his powers, than to say that in the general force of writing he as decidedly appears the superior man. One or two of his retorts, particularly, are deadly and irresistible.

About the time of Horne's public quarrel with Wilkes, and in the interval between that and his combat with Junius, he was rendering considerable service in matters of national right and privilege; first in resisting what, if quietly suffered, might soon have grown to a most iniquitous and star-chamber practice, the attempt to compel a man arraigned as a culprit to answer interrogatories tending to make him criminate himself. This attempt was made by Lord Mansfield in the case of Bingley, a printer, who was prosecuted for a libel, and whom the evidence was not sufficient to convict. Horne at once continued to excite the national attention to this alarming innovation and its natural consequences, and confirmed, and procured to be ultimately rewarded, the courageous obstinacy of the printer in refusing to answer the interrogatories. The haughty judge had the mortification of discharging at last the man whom a considerable length of imprisonment had not in the smallest degree intimidated from defying him. Horne was extremely and very justly zealous and anxious that this man should, for the sake of example, receive the most marked tokens of public favour.

His next effort was to maintain the right of the nation to be made acquainted with the proceedings of the legislature. By many of those who can never hear his name without some reproach of his factious spirit, it would nevertheless be deemed a great violation of public rights, if the debates in parliament were to be suddenly forbidden, by authority, to be published. They are probably but little aware, how much the nation, in obtaining the practical concession of this as a right, is indebted to him. No such thing, except under some fictitious form, of little real use to the public, had been allowed before the period of his political activity. The House of Commons indignantly and pertinaciously resisted the attempts to assume it as a right : and though the prohibition *must* have been taken off some time, it was owing very much to his management and energy that it was effectually broken through about forty years since. It appears to have been, in a considerable measure, in consequence and in execution of a plan laid by him, that several spirited printers dared, nearly at the same time, to bring the question to issue by boldly publishing some of the debates : and in consequence of his influence with the city magistrates, that these delinquents were enabled to brave or elude the utmost exertions of the House to punish them. And ever since, that liberty has been held by the people so much in the form and spirit of an absolute right, that there has been no material effort to take it from them.

Mr. Stephens informs us that, at length, at the age of thirty-seven, Horne "resigned his gown ;" which we can well believe he had for a good while worn with sensations but little more enviable than those inflicted on Hercules by the Centaur's shirt. In throwing it off he assured and congratulated himself that he was escaping into an unlimited freedom, the first luxury of which would be to adopt, without any further interference, a profession congenial to his taste and ambition, and in which he had apparently very good reason to flatter himself he should attain the highest distinction and emolument. The latter of these, indeed, was very far from being an object of eagerness in any part of his life ; but so many expenses incurred in prosecuting public objects, and in resisting or sustaining the effects of political and legal revenge, often gave him cause to feel the narrowness of his pecuniary resources.

We have a somewhat entertaining account of his frugal domestic economy, while preparing himself for the bar, after the resignation of his vicarage of New Brentford—the highest ground in official rank, strictly so denominated, which was destined to be attained by one of the strongest and most ambitious spirits of the age, whose juvenile and inferior associates were seen scaling, and taking a firm position on the heights of ecclesiastical and legal dignities and wealth. In this state of seclusion and severe study he was, nevertheless, always ready at a moment's warning, to spring like a royal tiger from his thicket, on the agents and abettors of any public delinquency. Mr. Tooke, a moderate wealthy political friend, whose name he was afterwards authorized to assume, sought his advice in a case that appeared desperate. In consequence of purchasing an estate called Purley, (from which Horne's great philological work took its title) he had been involved in a vexatious litigation about manorial rights with a neighbouring gentleman of great influence, who had betaken himself at last to the decisive expedient of an act of parliament. The bill which was in progress was highly unjust; but through some such fatality, as would never have happened before or since in such a place, it was going forward with the most perfect success, in contempt of every effort made to place the matter in its true light; and appeared certain of the final sanction of the House of Commons on the third reading—appointed for the very next day to that in which the case was despondingly stated to Horne. His answer was, "If the facts be as you represent them, the House shall not pass that bill." He immediately suggested an expedient which would perhaps have occurred to no other man in England, and took on himself the execution at a hazard which very few would have been willing, for the sake of either friendship or public justice, to share. He immediately wrote, in language the most pointedly offensive, an attack on the Speaker of the House of Commons, the noted Sir Fletcher Norton, with reference to the bill in question; and obtained its insertion in the newspaper, rendered so popular by the letters of Junius, on the condition, of course, that the printer, when summoned to account, should produce the author. The object of this proceeding was, to compel the House to a much more full and formal attention to the subject of the bill, than it had previously been induced to give; and at the same time, as an equally necessary thing, to

give its virtue the benefit of having the censorial attention of the public strongly fixed on its conduct. He was confident that by doing this he should frustrate the parliamentary measure, and then, for the consequences to himself, he had courage enough to take his chance. The next day a great sensation was manifest in what might be called the political public; and, as he had foreseen, the attention of a full House was called, in precedence to all other business, to the flagrant outrage on its dignity—a dignity so vulnerable by a plain *charge* of misconduct, though it had not been injured in the least by the misconduct itself. After a fine display of generous indignation, a summons was sent for the instant appearance of the printer. He obeyed, and, as he had been directed, immediately gave up the name of the criminal in chief, who had taken care to be already in the House, prepared to confront, probably with very little trepidation, the whole anger of the august assembly. A momentary silence of surprise and confusion followed the announcement of his name, which was come to be almost synonymous with that expression of recognizance, “the enemy.” On being called forth, he disavowed all disrespect to the Speaker whom he had libelled, calmly explained the motives of the proceeding, and then made such a luminous statement of the case of his friend, that the schemers and advocates of the injustice were baffled, the obnoxious parts of the bill were immediately thrown out, and, several resolutions were moved and carried “to prevent all such precipitate proceedings for the future.” There is no punishing conquerors, however offensive may have been their conduct. After a very slight formality of detention in custody, he was set at liberty, on some pretended inconclusiveness of proof against him.

The next thing that brought him out again conspicuously before the public, was an advertisement in the newspapers, signed with his name, proposing a subscription for the families of the Americans who were slain at Lexington, a fact which he pronounced, in the most explicit language possible, (and which he repeated in a second publication,) a *murder* committed by the king’s troops. He wished and hoped by some such act of daring and notoriety, to rouse the attention of the nation to the infatuated proceedings of the government with respect to the American colonies. For a good while no vindictive notice was taken of this wicked libel, as it was found to be when the minister was become stronger in the parliament.

In the second year after its publication, the writer suddenly and unexpectedly found himself within the iron grasp of the attorney-general, Thurlow, with his information *ex-officio*, and had another opportunity of evincing his courage and resources in a trial before Lord Mansfield, and a personal contest with him. The speeches in defence are given, and characters of the judge and attorney-general.

There could be no manner of uncertainty as to the result of such a prosecution against Horne. Though he was, it seems, the only man in the country that incurred any punishment on account of opinions avowed against the American war, he could not in the least wonder that in his case they were to be expiated by a fine and twelve months residence in the King's Bench prison. He *might* however, notwithstanding all he had seen of the management of public concerns, feel some degree of surprise, as we suppose most of the readers of the description will, at the benevolent care which had been taken that the imprisonment should not involve a complication of evils unknown to the laws, and beyond the purposes of justice.

"Conversant as he was in the ordinary transactions of human life, his surprise cannot be supposed trifling, when, after being consigned to this jail, by the special command of the Chief Justice of England, he had still a habitation to seek; for, after stopping a few minutes in the lodge, he was conducted to a vacant space within the walls, and there left, in utter ignorance of his future fate, and an entire stranger to all around him! It may be supposed, perhaps, by the sons and daughters of affluence, who reside in splendid apartments, and repose every night on beds of down, that even for the most wretched prisoner there is due provision in respect to a decent lodging; where poverty, sorrow, or misfortunes may be secluded from the gaze of mankind, and find an asylum at least, if comfort be denied them. But this would prove a grand mistake, for the captives being generally more numerous than the apartments, it is by seniority alone that the unhappy inmates succeed to the occupancy of a small bed-chamber, totally devoid of any furniture or conveniency whatever. All this, as Mr. Horne solemnly assured me, he learned, for the first time, on the parade, whither he proceeded in charge of two tipstaves, who took their leave without condescending to give him any information whatever. On his distress being made known to the spectators, a person, who proved to be a Jew, offered, for a sum of money, to accommodate him immediately. Ten guineas were accordingly deposited in his hands; but it was speedily discovered that this son of Israel had not any apartment at his command, being only the joint-tenant of a miserable little room, in common with four or five other debtors. To the honour of the prisoners, however, they immediately interposed, and obliged him to restore the money to the stranger, who, being charmed with their love of justice, and determined not to be outdone by them in point of generosity, divided the sum

in question among the poorer sort of the inhabitants. The clerk of the papers, on learning this anecdote, immediately made his appearance, and offered, for *five hundred pounds*, beforehand, to accommodate him with a small house, situate within the rules, during the whole period of his confinement; but as the payment of a weekly sum was preferred, the negotiation was instantly concluded on that basis."

He sustained very material injury, both in his property and his health, from this imprisonment; but the most vexatious circumstance of his whole life was to be encountered soon after his restoration to liberty. He had kept the number of terms requisite as a qualification for being called to the bar, and proceeded to make application for this formality of admittance, without, it seems, the slightest suspicion that an insuperable obstacle was to rise up suddenly, as if from the ground, at his approach. The first and a second application were resisted by a majority of the benchers of the Inner Temple, and with such circumstances as to convince him that any further prosecution of the object would be vain. "This refusal," says the biographer, "was a cruel and severe blow. Indeed it was struck at a vital part; and, I am persuaded, contributed not a little to sour and embitter the remaining portion of his life." The repulse is attributed in part to the "mean jealousy of some practising-lawyers, who were afraid of being eclipsed by a new competitor."

Some other reason, however, for the rejection, was to be pretended; and the only thing that even lawyers could found an exception upon, was the circumstance of his having been a clergyman.

Thus rejecting one profession—rejected by another—injured in his small fortune—but elate with the proudest consciousness of talent, he was to commit himself under inauspicious omens, for the remainder of his life, a very protracted remainder, as it proved, to the course of events and chances in a turbulent and changing state of the times. He was, however, certain that no man could have greater promptitude and courage in seizing events, and he might be acquitted of any great excess of vanity if he even flattered himself he could sometimes create them. No disappointments, nor the comparatively humble rank in society in which he was condemned to continue, could, in the smallest degree, repress the tone in which he had assumed to be the censor of the conduct of the uppermost people in the state, whether taken as individuals, or in the imposing pomp of official or legislative combina-

tion. Probably no man ever did, on the strength of what he possessed in his mere person, and in the destitution of all advantages of birth, wealth, station, or connexions, maintain, with such perfect and easy uniformity, so challenging and peremptory a manner towards great and pretending folks of all sorts. This arose from the consciousness that at all times he dared to fight any of them, on any subject, at a moment's warning, in writing, in personal dispute, in courts of law, or even, we fear, in that *unlawful* mode which it is the disgrace of this nation to tolerate.

In 1780 he wrote, in conjunction with Dr. Price, a tract against the American war, which is here represented as having contributed materially to its termination, by hastening the downfall of the wretched statesmen who were carrying it on. When the nation was restored to peace, he seems to have felt an unusual desire to taste it himself. He purchased a small estate near Huntingdon, and applied himself zealously to the study and practice of agriculture, to which he had long had a partiality, as what he regarded as "an useful and liberal science."

A violent ague compelled him to a speedy retreat from the reclaiming of marshes, and threw him back on the great town, where he recovered his health, took a house, and fairly closed with his destiny to be for life a wit, scholar, philosopher, and politician, without affluence, or power, or any effectual favour of those who possessed them.

He soon entered with great ardour into the cause of parliamentary reform; by coming forward as the champion of which, in 1782, William Pitt attained little less than the highest pitch of his father's popularity. Horne published a curious and ingenious scheme of a reformed representation and mode of election, of which an outline is here exhibited. But he was so really intent on the substantial object, that he made no difficulty of dismissing any peculiarity of his own speculations and projects, and coalescing in the apparently more practicable ones of Mr. Pitt—"ingenuously preferring," says Mr. Stephens, "that gentleman's plan to his own."

He became an intimate, earnest, indefatigable co-operator with this youth of promise, in the preparation of the plans and means of purifying the legislature; and entertained the highest respect for his political integrity so late, at least, as 1788, in which year he published, under the title of "Two Pair of

Portraits," an extended and very pointed contrast between Pitt and Fox, greatly to the disadvantage and depreciation of the latter, who was never forgiven by Horne for that decided hostility to popular interests with which he had begun his political career, and his subsequent coalition with Lord North. "While others objected to the inexperience of Mr. Pitt," says our author, "Horne referred to his talents, his candour, his ingenuousness, and augured the happiest results from his labours. He never, it is asserted, carried his principles of political reform beyond those avowed by that statesman, and constantly opposed the doctrines of annual parliaments and universal suffrage,* which were maintained by some of the zealous advocates of the cause, and which, Mr. Stephens says, contributed to defeat that cause by exciting an excessive alarm in the aristocratical part of the nation. It appears that the subject of these memoirs was for some time, notwithstanding all his knowledge of men and politicians, very sanguine in his confidence of its substantial success. It sunk into languor, however, even before the paragon of political virtue ascended into the better light which shines on the high places of the state. How it fared then, and ever since, nobody needs to be told.

"The Diversions of Purley," a book of very moderate size at its first appearance, was published in 1786. We have in the memoirs a whole needless chapter, in the form of an unsatisfactory analysis, instead of a brief general explanation in two or three lucid pages, of the object of the book, and of that peculiarity of its theory in which its acknowledged originality consisted.

In the following year he resumed his pen on a subject which made a great noise in its day, though now gone to its place among forgotten trifles. He vindicated, on the ground of law and general propriety, the reported marriage of the Prince of Wales with Mrs. Fitzherbert, assuming the fact of the marriage as undeniable. His next production was the "Portraits," already noticed, which concluded with these two questions :

First question. Which two of them will you choose to hang up in your cabinets, the Pitts or the Foxes ?

* At a somewhat later period it is said that he "hesitated as to the propriety of annual parliaments."

Second question. Where, on your conscience, should the other two be hanged?"

The author remarks what a prodigious alteration there would have been in at least one of the delineations, if the artist had brought the subjects again under his pencil a few years afterwards.

The celebrated trial of Mr. Hastings is mentioned as, within the whole extent of Horne's active life, the only great national concern in which he was content to be neutral; and even in that he strongly censured the mode of proceeding,—the multitude of the charges, the long speeches, the appeals to the passions, and the ruinous protraction. He thought if guilt existed it might be ascertained by a very short inquiry; and in that case he was "for punishing the receiver, and restoring the stolen property to the right owners." This might be very excellent doctrine: and therefore it was for owners *de facto* to beware of even permitting, much more of hastening, any decisive proof of the guilt.

A pleasing circumstance is related of his being applied to for advice relative to an Englishman taken by a corsair and detained in slavery at Algiers, but liberated in consequence of Horne's benevolent exertions. This very circumstance was the cause of his being brought into a certain degree of connexion with the famous and obnoxious London Corresponding Society, of which the biographer relates the very humble origin and the early history.

He made a distinguished figure in the year 1790, by contesting, with Mr. Fox and Lord Hood, the election for Westminster, with the greatest ability, and with no small measure of popularity, which he augmented by turning to the utmost account the refusal of his eminent antagonist to give a pledge for parliamentary reform. His failure, however, was a matter of course, and which he foresaw from the first; but he made it contribute even more than success would have done to his fame, by means of that memorable petition to the House of Commons, which contained certain bold and contemptuous expressions of crimination that have ever since been employed as the most pointed common-places in the censures of its corrupt constitution. The petition was read to the assembly, and received with as much displeasure as it is becoming and dignified for conscious and lofty integrity to manifest, under calumnies which it can calmly defy. The petition was readi-

ly voted "frivolous and vexatious;" but it is perhaps to be regretted, nevertheless, that it could not comport with the insulted dignity of the House to vouchsafe, in a very few words, such a notice and specific falsification of the following passage, as to prevent its being so often triumphantly repeated by the factious and the wicked.

"The said scrutiny was, by the direction or approbation of the House of Commons, relinquished, without effect, after having lasted ten months, and with an expense to Sir Cecil Wray of many thousand pounds more than appears by some late proceedings in Chancery to be the allowed average price of a perpetual seat in the House of ———, where seats for legislators are as notoriously bought and sold as stalls and standing for cattle at a fair." Vol. i. p. 94.

The expense occasioned to the other candidates by this petition brought on Horne an action for debt, in which Mr. Fox was successful, notwithstanding the singularly able and animated exertions of the defendant, who could not fail to take full advantage of such an opportunity of throwing out a number of bold and important observations on the rights of juries, and on the flagrant corruptions in the representation, particularly of Westminster.

In 1792, he became impatient of the pure breezes and exhilarating odours of the metropolis, and removed his residence to the village where he continued all the remainder of his life.

It is not, to be sure, a very lengthened apology, and depreciation of loyal and aristocratical anger, that the biographer is disposed to make for the animated interest taken by Mr. Horne Tooke* in this prodigious event (the French Revolution); but even still fewer words might have sufficed. Previously to it the unanimous voice of Englishmen, in notes alternately of scorn and commiseration, had pronounced the French people a nation of slaves; and nothing on earth could be more palpable, than that the slaves of a government have no chance for freedom but through the energy and assertion of their own will. When such a grand national assertion was successfully taking place, to have been otherwise than gratified in beholding it, would have betrayed, in any pretended friend of liberty, a meanly-constituted mind—unless he were a prophet; and we have no faith in any man's intelligence having been,

* He had assumed this additional surname in 1782, at the request of the gentleman of that name whose heir he was now understood to be.

at the commencement of that revolution, so prophetic of the sequel as to justify him in refusing, on the whole, his congratulations. Doubtless a man who could form no judgment on such a subject without the intermingling and influence of religious ideas, and the most refined order of moral principles, would have had, on this great occasion, some perceptions and fears to which our ex-clergyman was a stranger. Such a man might at some moments have feared it was too much to hope, that so depraved and irreligious a people should suddenly receive an immense and unmixed favour from the Divine Governor. He might have surmised with alarm some possible consequences of the sudden breaking loose of millions of ignorant papists and oppressed indignant semi-barbarians, incited, directed, represented, by thousands or myriads of infidels. His exultation, therefore, would have been greatly modified; but still the appearances were such as to justify a preponderance, for a season, of the hopeful and complacent feelings, in a mind confident that a grand melioration of the human condition, in these latter ages, is among the appointments of the Divine Goodness.

Though it is probable Horne entertained, notwithstanding any unfavorable omens from the quarter of religion and religious morality, an almost unmixed confidence in the happy results of this portentous movement in the civilized world, it uniformly appears that he had no wish for the revolutionary part of its agitations to be extended to this country. Amid all his zeal for reforms he had invariably, and we believe sincerely, declared for our old constitution; and that not under any illusory shape of approving certain abstract principles, supposed to be embodied in that constitution, and yet capable of taking a very different practical form; but with the most explicit approbation of an effective royalty and aristocracy. He was even solicitous that the approving good wishes, and the congratulations, conveyed to the French revolutionists from the friends of liberty in this country, should not go unaccompanied with some expressions of satisfaction with our own political system. When, in a meeting convoked to celebrate the event, Mr. Sheridan moved a resolution,

“Highly complimentary to the French revolution, Horne expressed a strong desire that some qualifying expression might be added to this general motion of approbation, and insisted ‘that the English nation had only to maintain and improve the constitution which their ancestors have trans-

mitted to them.' This position, although at first opposed, with tumult and vehemence, in consequence of his arguments and perseverance, was at length carried unanimously,—in the following form: 'We feel equal satisfaction that the subjects of England, by the virtuous exertions of their ancestors, have not so arduous a task to perform as the French had, 'but have only to maintain and improve the constitution which their forefathers have transmitted to them.'"

It would be possible for captiousness to go the length of affecting to discover in all this an artful contrivance for beguiling away loyal suspicion and vigilance from his deep-laid and pernicious designs. But we believe every one of the few candid and impartial readers of his life will be fully convinced, that this abhorred and pestiferous anarchist held most firmly the principles of a constitutional patriot, and never formed any projects inconsistent with that character.

As much candour, at the least, as this would require, is displayed on the other side by our author, when, in approaching the memorable period in Horne Tooke's life in which he himself anticipated a speedy surrender of that life on the gallows, the following admission is made in favour of the main mover of the famous prosecutions for treason in 1794.

"It is not to be supposed that Mr. Pitt, whose father had been the original author, and himself the prime mover, of a parliamentary reform, would have been so lost to all sense of shame, as to attempt to commit a legal murder on those who had followed his own example, and merely persevered in those plans which he himself had broached, matured, and abandoned! The minister never conceived the idea of a public prosecution, until he was firmly persuaded that a treasonable plot existed for the overthrow of the state, and that, under a popular pretext, a revolution was actually meditated, on the same principles, and with the same designs, as had been so recently effected in France."

Mr. Stephens gives a very curious account of a proceeding of Horne Tooke's at this period of loyal alarm and almost frenzy; a proceeding which formed, certainly, a most capital joke, but which, just at that crisis, involved some possibilities of mischief which would have been a greater price than even so excellent a joke was worth. The ministry employed and entertained a multitude of "reporters,"—a genteel denomination for spies; and a proportion of these were persons not of the meanest class, in the ordinary sense of that description.

"Some of these were actuated by zeal; while others, who would have spurned the idea of pecuniary gratifications, were influenced solely by the hopes of offices and appointments. One of the latter had for some time

attached himself to Mr. Tooke, and was a frequent visitor at Wimbledon. His station and character were calculated to shield him from suspicion, but his host, who was too acute to be easily duped, soon saw through the flimsy veil of his pretended discontent. As he had many personal friends, in various departments of government, he soon discovered the views, connexions, and pursuits of his guest ; but, instead of upbraiding him with his treachery, and dismissing him with contempt, as most other men in his situation would have done, he determined to foil him, if possible, at his own weapons."—"He accordingly pretended to admit the spy into his entire confidence, and completed the delusion, by actually rendering the person who wished to circumvent him, in his turn, a dupe. Mr. Tooke began by dropping remote hints relative to the strength and zeal of the popular party, taking care to magnify their numbers, praise their unanimity, and commend their resolution. By degrees he descended to particulars, and at length communicated confidentially, and under the most solemn promises of secrecy, the alarming intelligence that some of the guards were gained ; that an armed force was organized ; and that the nation was actually on the eve of a revolution. After a number of interviews, he at length affected to own, that he himself was at the head of the conspiracy, and boasted like Pompey of old 'that he could raise legions merely by stamping on the ground with his foot.'"

All this the miserable dupe, whose name we presume Mr. Stephens could have given, eagerly reported to his shrewd patrons, who could estimate so correctly the faculties of the two men, and were doubtless, among their other cares, beginning to consider which of the sinecures was likely to fall, or what new office they could invent, to reward so honourable a patriot.

What was a joke at Wimbledon was a serious and awful thing at Whitehall. The gull's stories came in thicker and darker. Other ominous signs were reported by other expectants of places, or earners of fees. A trivial note, containing the query, "Is it possible to get ready by Thursday?" was intercepted on its way to Catiline. The accidental scrawl of a child becomes portentous if an assembly of conjurers is convened to decipher it ; the alarm grew to terror ; and a few days afterwards the house of a friend where Horne was sitting at dinner was invested by a section of the British army, and he was carried to the Tower. After several months of confinement, with all the rigour compatible with the absolute demands of ill health, he was transferred to Newgate and the Old Bailey, to act a more conspicuous part than even in any former period of his life. During his imprisonment he did not know what was to form the matter of the charges against him, or what would be the mode of proceeding ; but was per-

suaded that his destruction was determined on, and that means would not fail to be found or made to effect it with a semblance of legality. He was prepared therefore, as he said, to enter the court with the spirit of a tiger; to throw off all restraint, and to fight the administrators of law and their superiors in the manner of a man who has but once to fight, and is resolved to signalize his fall by an exemplary and deserved vengeance on his persecutors. As a commencement of this last of his labours, he composed, in the interval between the charge, by Lord Chief Justice Eyre, to the grand jury and his arraignment at the bar, a speech to be addressed to the court. Of this speech "a correct copy," says Mr. Stephens, "is here inserted from the only document now in existence." This very extraordinary composition is a most daring and almost savage assault, with the charge of political and legal iniquity, on the Lord Chief Justice "and those by whom he was employed." The most deliberate and unfeigned defiance sustains the writer through every part of it.

It was his intention to have inserted a copy of this speech in each of the London newspapers; previously, we suppose our author means, to the trial; but on due reflection he was induced to forbear so flagrant a provocation; it may well be believed that his spirit did not at any moment sink below the pitch of intrepid defiance; but it would have been a wanton display of bravery to aggravate unnecessarily every prejudice and danger he had to confront; and it even might occur to him, that such an eager commencement might seem to betray something like a defect of confidence in himself to retain the full command of his powers of offence through every part of the subsequent proceeding, and at its expected fatal termination. He slightly moderated down his spirit to the convenient temper for action. It was but an inconsiderable reduction, however, and his first interlocutions in the court were quite in the tone of a man ready for battle. But early in the proceedings his highly-stimulated and completely-armed hostility was somewhat mitigated by the complaisance and respectful attention shown him by the court; in their progress it was almost beguiled away into wit and good humour; and at the conclusion he expressed himself in the strongest terms of grateful acknowledgment to the court, to his defenders, and to the jury. The pacific feeling was very much promoted by his gratification in perceiving with what a predominating vigour and de-

cided success his cause was advancing, under his own exertions and those of his advocates. It was so bland a mood that even Mr. Pitt, though he did not, our author says, escape through the "fiery ordeal" quite "unscorched," was treated with comparative lenity.

"After his" (Pitt's) "examination, it was observed by Mr. Tooke's nephew, on their return from the court, 'that he had got Pitt down, and might have done more with him.' 'Yes, I might, John,' was the reply, 'but never in my life did I choose to trample on a fallen foe.'"

We are not called to make any remark on those celebrated state prosecutions, in which a haughty, arbitrary, and vindictive administration were so notoriously deceived in their calculation and baffled in their design:—a defeat, however, which they took care to repay to the country and its liberties by a pernicious innovation on the fundamental laws relative to political crimes.

As to Horne Tooke, who was important and obnoxious enough to be, on a subsequent occasion, legislated against as an individual, nothing could be more complete than the triumph he obtained in this prosecution over all the calumniators who had charged him with anarchical principles. But, though gratified by this opportunity of taking his right ground, in sight of the nation, and pleased, in one view, to find that the administration of the law retained so much justice even toward men suspected and detested by the ruling powers, it appears, nevertheless, by the testimony of his biographer, and is sufficiently probable from the character of the man, that his satisfaction was not unmingled with an opposite sentiment with which very few persons will sympathize. Mr. Stephens says,

"I was assured by him, more than once, 'that he had been ever anxious to offer his life up as a sacrifice to his opinions;' and he appeared to me, toward the close of his existence, to be disappointed at the event, wishing rather to fall gloriously in what he considered to be the cause of the public, than perish ignominiously by the lapse of time or the pressure of disease."—Vol. ii. p. 53.

We cannot follow out the narrative of his life, which was perhaps somewhat less eventful, though the account of it is still more interesting, in what may be called its last though very protracted stage, from about the age of sixty to that of seventy-seven. Its most marked events were, another most vigorous contest for the representation of Westminster, ren-

dered famous in the records of political warfare by his humorous and most biting comments on the phrase "domestic enemies," employed by his opponent Sir Alan Gardner,—and his short occupation of a seat in the House of Commons for Old Sarum, an honour from the re-possession of which he was precluded, as is well known, by all the warlike formality of an act of parliament, which was levelled solely at him though it did not mention his name. During the short period of his privilege he was distinguished by the moderation, as much as by the good sense, of his speeches. And indeed, though in his addresses to the people at the Westminster election, and in the printed address in which, after being debarred any further admittance into the sanctuary at St. Stephen's, he seemed to fling that high honour with bitter scorn in the teeth of those who had decreed him incapable of it, there appears not the smallest diminution of the accustomed invective boldness, our author affirms that his trial had the effect of permanently modifying his language.

The latter half of the second volume is a very entertaining miscellany. There is a rather long series of brief notices of distinguished men, of various ranks, accomplishments, and professions, who held an acquaintance, more or less intimate, with Mr. Horne Tooke. It contains some curious anecdotes: but none, perhaps, more curious than the ugly one of Professor Porson's threatening, at Tooke's own table, to "*kick him and cuff him*," and Tooke's insisting on their fighting out their quarrel in a "*couple of quarts of brandy*," a kind of duel sufficiently to the Professor's taste, but which soon laid him senseless on the floor.

"On which the victor at this new species of *Olympic game*, taking hold of his antagonist's limbs in succession, exclaimed, 'This is the foot that was to have kicked, and the hand that was to have cuffed me!' and then drinking one glass more, to the speedy recovery of his prostrate adversary, ordered, 'that great care should be taken of Mr. Professor Porson;' after which he withdrew to the adjacent apartment, in which tea and coffee had been prepared, with the same seeming calmness as if nothing had occurred."

A number of the particulars in the philosopher's domestic arrangements are strongly illustrative of what was peculiar in his character, while the details concerning the painful diseases which oppressed him severely during many of his latter years, give the highest possible idea of that most extraordinary

strength of mind which would maintain in spite of them an animated and generally cheerful temper.

Horne Tooke was unquestionably one of the half dozen best talkers of his age ; but Mr. Stephens was a very inferior Boswell ; though he has given a few tolerably good things from the notes which he says he was several years in the habit of making of conversations in which he heard Horne Tooke display himself. It is not so much, however, the smart or fine sayings that he seems to have recorded, as his grave opinions on questions, books, and men. Judgments are pronounced on several distinguished writers of this and other countries ; brief notices are recorded of discussions or dictates on points of literature, politics, law, history, agriculture, and a still wider extent of subjects, on which it would have been highly interesting and improving to hear this powerful thinker exert his acuteness and display his knowledge. A number of these fragments and relics retain a measure of the luminous appearance which we can well believe to have been very striking in the complete original exhibition.

If in conversation Horne was oftener allowed to dictate than compelled to argue, it was not his fault, as no man ever more promptly welcomed a challenge to debate ; and the more powerful his opponent, the more he was gratified. He had a constitutional courage hardly ever surpassed, a perfect command of his temper, all the warlike furniture and efficiency of prompt and extreme acuteness, satiric wit in all its kinds and degrees, from gay banter to the most deadly mordacity, and all this sustained by inexhaustible knowledge, and indefinitely reinforced, as his life advanced, by victorious exertion in many trying situations. Such a man would be made a despot whether he would or not, by the obsequiousness of those who were either by choice or necessity placed in his immediate sphere ; and it would depend on his temper whether he would be a tyrant.

He had a manner, it seems—a Sultanic look—which could instantly impose the silence of death if he willed any matter of inquiry to be made an end of. There is one instance of this which appears somewhat mysterious and somewhat foolish. The conversation had been about Junius. He had laughed at some of the claims to the honour of being that personage :

“ One of the company now asked if he knew the author. On the question being put, he immediately crossed his knife and fork on his plate, and

assuming a stern look, replied 'I do!' His manner, tone, and attitude were all too formidable to admit of any further interrogatories."

We are at a loss to conceive what there could be in the question to bring up all this majesty, and it seems rather a pitiable pusillanimity that durst not say one word to maintain the innocence of asking it, and even following it up with a second.

Mr. Stephens allows that, notwithstanding his hero's zealous habitual love of truth, he would sometimes, in disregard of it, fight for mere victory; a very superfluous expense of ammunition, it may be thought, to give it no worse character, in a man whose actual belief and unbelief included so many things to be maintained in hostility to prevailing opinions. A worse thing, however, than the folly of the practice was its immorality; and yet it is this, we presume, that the biographer means to extenuate by adding, as if it were an unquestionable proposition, this most thoughtless solecism,—“the ablest and BEST of men frequently fight, like gladiators, for fame, without troubling themselves much as to the justice of the cause.”

It would be but impertinent, however, to affect to call such a character as that of John Horne Tooke to account for this or the other particular culpability. It would be something like attending to criticize the transactions of a Pagan temple, and excepting to one rite as ungraceful, perhaps, and to another practice as irreverent; like as if the *substance* of the service were of a quality to deserve that its particular parts should be corrected. His whole moral constitution was unsound, from the exclusion, as far as can be judged from this work, or as there are any other means of judging, of all respect to a future account, to be given to the Supreme Governor. Towards the conclusion of his life, he made calm and frequent references to his death, but not a word is here recorded expressive of anticipations beyond it. The unavoidable inference from the whole of these melancholy memorials is, that he reckoned on the impunity of eternal sleep. Not, however, that he was willing to acknowledge any obligations to that protective economy; for he is known to have insisted, in a tone of the utmost confidence, in a very serious conversation not very long before his death, that if *there should* be a future life and retribution, he, of all men, had no reason to be afraid of it, for that he had even greater merit than could be required for his acquittal before a just Judge. The grand rule of moral excellence, even

according to the gospel, he observed, was, to do to others as we would they should do to us ; but *he* had gone much beyond this.

From Mr. Stephens's record it would not appear that he would very often formally and gravely talk on religion, though he would advert to it in the incidental way of satire and *swearing*. One particular conversation is alluded to in which his opinions were more disclosed than on any other remembered occasion. But with the nature of these avowed opinions the readers were not to be entrusted, further than some trifling hints, by implication, that he was not a polytheist!—In one conversation, not long before his death, he enlarged on the divine goodness, as manifest in the constitution of the world, and as having been amply experienced by himself. He maintained a wonderful serenity, a very signally philosophic tone, amidst his complicated and often oppressive bodily sufferings. At one time, however, it appears he consented to live only in compliance with the entreaties of his friends, having, as it seems, determined to withdraw himself from the burden by declining all sustenance.

He advanced to the close of his life with a self-complacent mixture of pride and gayety. A thoughtful religious reader will accompany him with a sentiment of deep melancholy, to behold so keen, and strong, and perverted a spirit, triumphant in its own delusions, fearlessly passing into the unknown world.

In closing this article, and wishing we knew how to apologize for its unpardonable prolixity, we are bound to repeat that, as a political man, we think it evident that Horne has experienced the utmost degree of injustice ; that his speculations and projects were moderate, that they uniformly aimed at the public good, that they were maintained with a consistency which put most of his distinguished contemporaries to shame, and that this very same inflexible consistency was a principal cause of the opprobrium with which time-serving politicians loaded him, in their own defence.

III.

COLERIDGE'S FRIEND.

The Friend; a Literary, Moral, and Political Weekly Paper, excluding personal and party politics, and the events of the day. Conducted by S. T. COLERIDGE.

It was with no small pleasure we saw any thing announced of the nature of a proof or pledge that the author of this paper was in good faith employing himself, or about to employ himself, in the intellectual public service. His contributions to that service have, hitherto, borne but a small proportion to the reputation he has long enjoyed of being qualified for it in an extraordinary degree. This reputation is less founded on a small volume of juvenile poems, and some occasional essays in periodical publications, than on the estimate formed and avowed by all the intelligent persons that have ever had the gratification of falling into his society.

After his return, several years since, from a residence of considerable duration in the Southeast of Europe, in the highest maturity of a mind, which had, previously to that residence, been enriched with large acquisitions of the most diversified literature and scientific knowledge, and by various views of society both in England and on the continent; his friends promised themselves, that the action of so much genius, so long a time, on such ample materials, would at length result in some production, or train of productions, that should pay off some portion of the debt due to the literary republic, from one of the most opulent of its citizens. A rather long period, however, had elapsed, and several projects had been reported in the usual vehicles of literary intelligence, before this paper was undertaken. An idea of the mental habits and acquirements brought to its execution, will be conveyed by an extract from the prospectus, which was written in the form of a letter to a friend.

"It is not unknown to you that I have employed almost the whole of my life in acquiring, or endeavouring to acquire, useful knowledge, by study, reflection, observation, and by cultivating the society of my superiors in intellect, both at home and in foreign countries. You know too, that, at different periods of my life, I have not only planned, but collected the materials for many works on various and important subjects; so many indeed, that the number of my unrealized schemes, and the mass of my miscellaneous fragments, have often furnished my friends with a subject of railery, and sometimes of regret and reproof. Waiving the mention of all private and accidental hindrances, I am inclined to believe that this want of perseverance has been produced in the main by an over-activity of thought, modified by a constitutional indolence, which made it more pleasant to me to continue acquiring, than reduce what I had acquired to a regular form. Add too, that almost daily throwing off my notices or reflections in desultory fragments, I was still tempted onwards by an increasing sense of the imperfections of my knowledge, and by the conviction that, in order fully to comprehend and develope any one subject, it was necessary that I should make myself master of some other, which again as regularly involved a third, and so on, with an ever-widening horizon. Yet one habit, formed during long absences from those with whom I could converse with full sympathy, has been of advantage to me—that of daily writing down in my memorandum or common-place books, both incidents and observations; whatever had occurred to me from without, and all the flux and reflux of my mind within itself. The number of these notices, and their tendency, miscellaneous as they were, to one common end ("*quid sumus, et quid futuri gignimur*," *what we are, and what we are to become: and thus from the end of our being to deduce its proper objects*), first encouraged me to undertake the Weekly Essay of which you will consider this letter as the prospectus."

Being printed on stamped paper, these essays were conveyed by the post, free of expense, to any part of the country. In the mode of publication, therefore, and what may be called the exterior character of the project, "The Friend" was an imitation of those sets of essays which, from the Tatler down to the Rambler, and several much later works, had first supplied entertainment and instruction in small successive portions, during several months or years, and then taken their rank among books of permanent popularity. Mr. Coleridge has correctly distinguished, in a brief and general manner, the objects to which these works were mainly directed, and rendered a tribute of animated applause to their writers; at the same time bespeaking the candour of his readers to a series of essays, which should attempt to instruct after a very different method. It was avowed that they would aim much more at the development of general principles; it would be inferred, of course, that they would be of a much more abstract and metaphysical character. Mr. Coleridge fairly warned those whom he invited to

become his readers, that, though he should hope not unfrequently to interest the affections, and captivate the imagination, yet a large proportion of the essays were intended to be of a nature, which might require a somewhat resolute exercise of intellect.—It was not proposed to terminate the series at an assigned point; it might be expected to proceed as long as the writer's industry and resources should command the public approbation. With one or two considerable interruptions, it reached as far as twenty-eight numbers, and there ended so abruptly that a memoir of Sir Alexander Ball was left unfinished. At several points in the progress of the work, the writer confessed that the public patronage was not such as to make it probable he could carry it forward to any great length; but no explanation was given of the suddenness of its discontinuance.

Perhaps it may be questioned, now, after a portion of the intended work has been given, whether the project did not involve some degree of miscalculation. Even the consideration of a rather excessive price was likely to affect the success of a work which, though coming with some of the exterior marks of a newspaper, was yet to derive nearly as little aid from the stimulant facts and questions of the day, as if it had been a commentary on Aristotle or Plato. A still more unfavourable augury might, perhaps, have been drawn from the character of Mr. Coleridge's composition, as taken in connexion with the haste inseparable from a weekly publication. The cast of his diction is so unusual, his trains of thought so habitually forsake the ordinary tracts, and therefore the whole composition is so liable to appear strange and obscure, that it was evident the most elaborate care, and a repeated revisal, would be indispensable in order to render so original a mode of writing sufficiently perspicuous to be in any degree popular. And it is equally evident that the necessity of finishing a sheet within each week, against a particular day and hour, must be totally incompatible with such patient and matured workmanship. A considerable portion of the short allotment of time might, in spite of every better resolution, be beguiled away in comparative indolence; or it might be consumed by casual and unforeseen avocations; or rendered fruitless by those lapses into languor and melancholy, to which genius, especially of the refined and poetic order, is extremely subject; or even wasted in the ineffectual endeavour to fix exclusively on some one of many equally eligible subjects. It was to be foreseen that the natu-

ral consequences would be, sometimes such a degree of haste as to leave no possibility of disposing the subject in the simplest, clearest order, and giving the desirable compression, and lucidness, and general finishing to the composition; sometimes, from despair of doing this, a recourse to shifts and expedients to make up the number, in a slighter way than had been intended, and perhaps promised; and often a painful feeling of working at an ungracious task, especially if, in addition, the public approbation should be found to be less liberally awarded than had been expected. Such compulsory despatch would have been a far less inconvenience in the conducting of a paper intended merely for amusement, or for the lightest kind of instruction, or as a weekly commentary on the contemporary measures and men—a department in which the facility and attractiveness of the topics, and the voracity of the public, exempt the writer from any severity of intellectual toil, or solicitude for literary perfection: but it was almost necessarily fatal in a work to be often occupied with deep disquisitions, and under the added disadvantage that the author had been previously much less accustomed to write than to think. When, besides, the work aspired to a very high rank in our permanent literature, there was perhaps an obvious impolicy in subjecting it to such circumstances of publication, as should preclude the minute improvements of even a tenth revision. It should seem probable, on the whole, that a mode better adapted to the effective exertion of Mr. Coleridge's great talents might have been advised, in the form of a periodical publication to appear in larger portions, at much longer intervals.

Some of the consequences thus to be anticipated from the plan of the undertaking, are actually perceptible in the course of the work. The writer manifests great indecision as to the choice and succession of his subjects. After he appears to have determined on those to be treated in the immediately ensuing numbers, those numbers, when they come, may be employed on totally different subjects,—introduced by accidental suggestion—or from their being such as would be more easily worked, in the brief allowance of time, into the required length and breadth of composition. Questions avowedly intended to be argued very early, as involving great fundamental principles, are deferred till the reader forgets what the author has said of their importance. Various subjects are adverted to, here and there in the course of the work, as to be hereafter

investigated, and are never mentioned again. In some instances, the number to which the commencement or the conclusion of an important inquiry has stood over, will be found made up perhaps, for the greater part, of letters, or short fragments, with translations from a minor Italian poet. Several of the numbers, towards the latter end of the series, are employed on the character of the late Sir Alexander Ball, which, however meritorious, was not probably, in the opinion of the majority of the readers, of sufficient celebrity to claim so considerable a space in an expensive work; especially while several most interesting points of inquiry, of which they had been led to expect an early investigation were still, and indefinitely deferred. It is fair, however, to quote the author's apology or vindication, in which, toward the conclusion of the series, he attributes to his reader, the procrastination or relinquishment of the refined disquisitions, which he should himself have been happy to prosecute.

"The remainder of my work, therefore, hitherto, has been devoted to the purpose of averting this mistake," (that which had imputed to him a coincidence of opinion with the "French physiocratic philosophers") "as far as I have been compelled by the general taste of my readers to interrupt the systematic progress of the plan, by essays of a lighter kind, or which at least required a less effort of attention. In truth, since my twelfth number, I have not had courage to renew any subject which *did* require attention. The way to be admired, is to tell the reader what he knew before, but clothed in a statelier phraseology, and embodied in apt and lively illustrations. To attempt to make a man wiser, is of necessity to remind him of his ignorance: and, in the majority of instances, the pain actually felt is so much greater than the pleasure anticipated, that it is natural that men should attempt to shelter themselves from it by contempt or neglect. For a living writer is yet sub judice; and if we cannot follow his conceptions or enter into his feelings, it is more consoling to our pride, as well as more agreeable to our indolence, to consider him as lost beneath, rather than as soaring out of our sight above us. Itaque id agitur, ut ignorantia etiam ab ignominiâ liberetur. Happy is that man, who can truly say, with Giordano Bruno, and whose circumstances at the same time permit him to *act* on the sublime feeling——

"Procedat nudus, quem non ornant nubila,
Sol! Non conveniunt Quadrupedum phaleræ
Humano dorso! Porro Veri species

Quæsitæ, inventa, at patefacta, me efferat!

Etsi nullus intelligat,

Si cum naturâ et sub lumine,

Id vere plusquam satis est." p. 335.

It may easily be believed that Mr. Coleridge had cause to complain of the impatience of some of his readers, under

those demands of a strong mental exertion which some of his essays have made on them; but the degree of this required exertion is greatly underrated, we think, in the following observations in the same number.

“Themes like these, not even the genius of a Plato or a Bacon could render intelligible without demanding from the reader, *thought* sometimes, and *attention* generally. By *thought* I here mean the voluntary production in our own minds of those states of consciousness, to which, as to his fundamental facts, the writer has referred us: while *attention* has for its object, the order and connexion of thoughts and images, each of which is in itself already and familiarly known. Thus the elements of geometry require attention only; but the analysis of our primary faculties, and the investigation of all the absolute grounds of religion and morals, are impossible without energies of thought in addition to the effort of attention. The Friend never attempted to disguise from his readers, that both attention and thought were efforts, and the latter a most difficult and laborious effort; nor from himself, that to require it often, or for any continuance of time, was incompatible with the nature of a periodical publication, even were it less incongruous than it unfortunately is, with the present habits and pursuits of Englishmen. Accordingly, after a careful re-perusal of the preceding numbers, I can discover but *four* passages which supposed in the reader any energy of thought and voluntary abstraction. But attention I confess two thirds of the work hitherto have required. On whatever subject the mind feels a lively interest, attention, though always an effort, becomes a delightful effort; and I should be quite at ease, could I secure for the whole work, as much of it as a party of earnest whist-players often expend in a single evening, or a lady in the making up of a fashionable dress. But where no interest previously exists, attention (as every schoolmaster knows) can be produced only by terror: which is the true reason why the majority of mankind learn nothing systematically, but as schoolboys or apprentices.”

Not to dwell on the arbitrary and rather tenebrious distinction between thought and attention, (which might be given as a fair specimen of the extent of the demand made on the reader's mind in a multitude of passages,) we cannot help saying, that this is a somewhat too reserved acknowledgment—that the “Friend” has produced a volume, of which a considerable portion is hard to be understood, and some passages of which it may be doubted whether any one reader, after his very best efforts, has felt sure that he did so understand as to be able to put the meaning into other equivalent words of his own. We cannot but think that, in some still later re-perusal, the author himself will have perceived that not a few of his conceptions, taken as detached individual thoughts, are enounced with an obscurity of a somewhat different kind from that which may seem inevitably incident, in some degree, to the expression of

thoughts of extreme abstraction. And sometimes the conjunctive principle among several thoughts that come in immediate succession is so unobvious, that the reader must repeatedly peruse, must analyze, we might almost say, must excruciate, a considerable portion of the composition, before he can feel any confidence that he is master of the connexion ;—and at last he is so little sure of having a real hold of the whole combination, that he would not trust himself to state that particular part of the “Friend’s” opinions and sentiments to an intelligent inquirer. When he could perhaps give, in a very general form, the apparent result of a series of thoughts, he would be afraid to attempt assigning the steps by which his author had arrived at it.

There can be no doubt that, by such patient labour as the adopted mode of publication entirely forbade, the writer could have given, if we may so express it, more roundness and prominence to the logical fibres of his composition, and a more unequivocal substance to some of its more attenuated components ; in short, left nothing obscure but what was invincibly and necessarily so, from the profound abstraction and exquisite refinement of thought, in which Mr. Coleridge would have extremely few equals in whatever age he had lived.

Our contracted limits will not allow more than a very brief notice of the several subjects on which the author’s intellect and imagination have thrown their light and colours, in a more fixed or in a momentary manner, in the course of this desultory performance. It would be fully as interesting, though a more difficult task, to discriminate some of the qualities which distinguish his manner of thinking and writing : and we shall make a short attempt at this, though with no small degree of diffidence in our ability to render the more subtle characteristics palpable in description. Some of them are almost as undefinable, as the varied modifications of the air by which very susceptible organs can perceive the different state of that element as subsisting in one district and in another ; almost as undefinable, as the tinge by which the light of the rising and setting sun in spring or autumn, is recognised as of a quite different character from its morning and evening radiance in the other seasons.

And while we are making this reference to the elements and phenomena of nature, we will confess that this author, beyond any other, (Mr. Wordsworth is next) gives us the im-

pression, or call it the fancy, of a mind constructed to bear a certain indescribable analogy to nature—that is, to the physical world, with its wide extent, its elements, its mysterious laws, its animated forms, and its variety and vicissitude of appearances. His mind lives almost habitually in a state of profound sympathy with nature, maintained through the medium of a refined illusion of genius, which informs all nature with a kind of soul and sentiment, that bring all its forms and entities, animate and inanimate, visible and invisible, into a mystical communion with his feelings. This sympathy is, or involves, an exceedingly different feeling from that with which a strictly philosophic mind perceives and admires in nature the more definable attributes of variety, order, beauty, and grandeur. These are acknowledged with a vivid perception; but, in our author's powerful imagination, they become a kind of moral attributes of a half-intellighential principle, which dimly, but with mysterious attraction, discloses itself from within all matter and form. This sympathy has retained him much more effectually in what may be called the school of nature, than is usual to men of genius who enter so much into artificial society, and so extensively study the works of men: and the influences of this school have given that form to his habits of thinking which bears so many marks of analogy to the state of surrounding physical nature. To illustrate this we may observe, that he perpetually falls on analogies between moral truth and facts in nature: in his figurative language he draws his similes and metaphors from the scenes of nature in preference to the departments of art—though these latter are also very much at his command: his ideas have much of the unlimited variety of nature; they have much also of its irregularity, being but little constrained into formal artificial method: there is in his train of thinking a great deal of what may be called colour and efflorescence, and but little of absolutely plain bare intellectual material: like nature as to her productions, he seems as willing to bestow labour and completeness on little thoughts as on great ones: we may add, he does not show any concern about mixing the little and great together,—sublime and remote ideas, and humble and familiar ones, being readily admitted, if they happen to come in immediate succession.

The above description of our author's sympathy with nature, and his mystical perception of something like soul and senti-

ment residing in all material elements and forms, will not be misunderstood to impute to him any thing like a serious adoption of the atheistical principle of Spinoza, or of the Stoic or Platonic dogmas about the Soul of the World. This converse with all surrounding existence is, in the perfect consciousness of our author's mind, no more than the emanation of that mind itself; imparting, in its meditative enthusiasm, a character of imaginary moral being and deep significance to all objects, but leaving his understanding in the full and solemn belief of a Supreme Intelligence, perfectly distinct from the whole universe. But there is strong reason to suspect, that certain of his poetical contemporaries renounce the idea of such a Divine Intelligence, in their fancy of the all-pervading, inexplicable something, which privileged and profoundly thoughtful spirits may perceive, and without illusion, in the light of the sun, in clouds, in silent groves, and in the sound of winds and mountain torrents.

But we ought to have remarked, first, on some of the more easily definable of the distinguishing properties of the "Friend's" intellectual character. Among the foremost may be mentioned the independence and the wide reach with which he thinks. He has given attendance in all the schools of moral and metaphysical philosophy, ancient and modern, but evidently has attended there rather to debate the matter with the professors, than with submissive homage to receive their dictates. He would have been a most factious and troublesome pupil in the academy of Pythagoras. He regards all subjects and doctrines as within the rightful sphere of free examination: and the work affords evidence, that a very large number of them have actually been examined by him with extraordinary severity. Yet this freedom of thinking, supported as it is by the conscious possession of great power, and exceedingly ample and diversified knowledge, does not degenerate into arrogance; a high and sincere respect being uniformly shown for the great intellectual aristocracy of both the past and present times, but especially of the past. Of the eminent writers of our own country, he evinces a higher veneration for those of the seventeenth, than those of the subsequent century, and of the present time; and professes to have been of late years more familiar with them, and to have involuntarily acquired some degree of conformity to their manner of thinking and to their style.

Another instantly apparent distinction of our author's man-

ner of thinking, is its extreme abstractedness. Considering that many of his subjects are not of that class which, by the necessity of their nature, *can* be discussed in no other than a metaphysical manner, he has avoided, in a wonderful and unequalled degree, all the superficial and obvious forms of thought which they might suggest. He always carries on his investigation at a depth, and sometimes a most profound depth, below the uppermost and most accessible stratum; and is philosophically mining among its most recondite principles of the subject, while ordinary intellectual and literary workmen, many of them barely informed of the very existence of this Spirit of the Deep, are pleasing themselves and those they draw around them, with forming to pretty shapes or commodious uses, the materials of the surface. It may be added, with some little departure from the consistency of the metaphor, that if he endeavours to make his voice heard from this region beneath, it is apt to be listened to as a sound of dubious import, like that which fails to bring articulate words from the remote recess of a cavern, or the bottom of the deep shaft of a mine. However familiar the truths and facts to which his mind is directed, it constantly, and as if involuntarily, strikes, if we may so speak, into the invisible and the unknown of the subject: he is seeking the most retired and abstracted form in which any being can be acknowledged and realized as having an existence, or any truth can be put in a proposition. He turns all things into their ghosts, and summons us to walk with him in this region of shades—this strange world of disembodied truth and entities.

He repeatedly avows, that it is less his object to teach truth in its most special and practical form, and in its detailed application, than to bring up into view and certainty a number of grand general principles, to become the lights of judgment, on an endless variety of particular subjects. At least this was the proposed object of the earlier part, the first twenty or thirty numbers, of the intended series. These principles were to be brought into clearness and authority, partly by statement and argument in an abstract form, and partly by showing them advantageously in operation, as applied to the trial and decision of several interesting questions. But the abstruseness often unavoidable in the pure intellectual enunciation of a principle, prevails also in an uncommon degree, in the present work, through the practical illustrations—even when the

matter of those illustrations consists of very familiar facts. The ideas employed to explain the mode of the relation between the facts and the principle, are sometimes of such extreme tenuity as to make a reader who is anxious to comprehend, but unaccustomed to abstraction, feel as if he were deficient by nearly one whole faculty, some power of intellectual sight or tact with which he perceives the author to be endowed,—for there is something that every where compels him to give the author credit for thinking with great acuteness, even when he is labouring in vain to refine his own conceptions into any state that can place him in real communication with the author's mind. The surpassing subtlety of that mind is constantly descrying the most unobvious relations, and detecting the most veiled aspects of things, and pervading their substance in quest of whatever is most latent in their nature. This extreme subtlety is the cause of more than one kind of difficulty to the reader. Its *necessary* consequence is that refinement of observation on which we have so prolixly remarked; but it has another consequence, the less or greater degree of which depended on the author's choice. He has suffered it continually to retard him in, or divert him from, the straightforward line of thought to his object. He enters on a train of argumentative observations to determine a given question. He advances one acute thought, and another, and another: but by this time he perceives among these which we may call the primary thoughts, so many secondaries—so many bearings, distinctions, and analogies—so many ideas starting sideways from the main line of thought—so many pointings towards subjects infinitely remote—that, in the attempt to seize and fix in words these secondary thoughts, he will often suspend for a good while the progress toward the intended point. Thus each thought that was to have been only *one* thought, and to have transmitted the reader's mind immediately forward to the next in order and in advance, becomes an exceedingly complex combination of thoughts, almost a dissertation in miniature: and thus our journey to the assigned point (if indeed we are carried so far, which is not always the case) becomes nothing less than a visit of curious inspection to every garden, manufactory, museum, and antiquity, situated near the road, throughout its whole length. Hence too it often happens, that the transitions are not a little perplexing. The transition directly from one primary thought,

as we venture to call it, in the train to the next, might be very easy: we might see most perfectly how, in natural logic, the one was connected with the other, or led to it: but when we have to pass to this next principal thought in the train, from some divergent and remote accessory of the former principal idea, we feel that we have lost the due bearing of the preceding part of the train, by being brought in such an indirect way to the resumption of it.

The same kind of observation is applicable to the comparisons and metaphors with which our author illustrates and adorns his speculations. In this component of good writing, we believe he has no superior in this or any other age. His figures are original, and various, and often *complexly* apposite, to a degree of which we do not at present recollect any example. They are taken indifferently from any part of a prodigious sphere of knowledge, and presented with every possible advantage of rich and definite expression. In the choice of them he very justly scorns, what has been noticed as a leading point of contradistinction of the French orators and poets from ours, the fastidiousness which declines similes taken from things of so humble a quality as to give to the figure a character of meanness. While he can easily reach, if he pleases, as far into remoteness and magnificence as the aphelion of a comet, for an object of illustrative comparison, he is not afraid to turn to literary account in the next paragraph, even a thing of so little dignity as those fastenings of garments called *hooks and eyes*. But the fault we venture to charge is, analogously to what we have said of the more austere intellectual parts of the composition, the frequent extension of a figure into a multiformity which beguiles both the author and reader from the direct and pressing pursuit of the main object. When the object is grave and important truth, the beauties of imagery, when introduced with a copiousness greatly beyond the strictest necessities of explanation, should be so managed as to be like flowery borders of a road: the way may have on each side every variety of beauty, every charm of shape, and hue, and scent, to regale the traveller: but, it should still be absolutely a *road*—going right on—with defined and near limits—and not widening out into a spacious and intricate wilderness of these beauties, where the man that was to travel is seduced to wander. When an apt figure occurs to our author, his imagination, (which has received with wonderful accuracy, and retained

with wonderful fidelity, *all* the ascertainable points of appearance and quality of almost all objects), instantaneously expands and finishes this figure, within his own mind, into a complete object or scene, with all its absolute and relative distinctions and circumstances; and his intellectual subtlety suddenly perceives, besides its principal and most obvious analogy with the abstract truth he is stating, various other more refined and minute analogies and appositenesses, which are more gratifying to his own mind than the leading analogy, partly from the consideration that only a very acute perception would have discerned them, and partly because a double intellectual luckiness is more unusual than a single one. Now, we have mentioned the *complexity* of appositeness, the several-fold relation between the figure and the truth to which it is brought as correspondent, as one of the *excellencies*, of our author's figures: and we have done so, because none but a writer of great genius will very frequently fall on such figures—and because a very specific rather than a merely general relation, an interior and essential rather than a superficial and circumstantial analogy, between the subject and the corresponding figure, *is* a great excellence as exhibiting the laws of reason prevalent through the operations of imagination; and it would often be found that the specific and pointed appropriateness of the comparison consists in its containing a double analogy. But when a subtle intelligence, perceiving something much beyond this duplicity of relation, introduces a number of perhaps real and exquisite, but extremely recondite correspondences, the reader, though pleased with the sagacious perception, so long as not confused by the complexity, is, at the same time, certainly diverted from the leading purpose of the discourse.

It is not alone in the detection of refined analogies that our author too much amplifies his figurative illustrations. He does it sometimes in the way of merely perfecting, for the sake of its own completeness, the representation of the thing which furnishes the figure, which is often done equally with philosophical accuracy and poetic beauty. But thus extended into particularity, the illustration exhibits a number of colours, and combinations, and branchings of imagery, neither needful nor useful to the main intellectual purpose. Our author is therefore sometimes like a man, who, in a work that requires the use of wood, but requires it only in the plain bare form of

straight-shaped poles and stakes, should insist that it shall be *living* wood, retaining all its twigs, leaves, and blossoms. Or, if we might compare the series of ideas in a composition to a military line, we should say that many of our author's images, and of even his more abstracted conceptions, are supernumerarily attended by so many related, but secondary and subordinate ideas, that the array of thought bears some resemblance to what that military line would be, if many of the men, veritable and brave soldiers all the while, stood in the ranks surrounded with their wives and children.

Of the properties which we have attempted, we sincerely acknowledge very inadequately, to discriminate and describe as characteristic of our author's mode of writing, the result is, that readers of ordinary, though tolerably cultivated faculties, feel a certain deficiency of the effective force which they believe such an extraordinary course of thinking ought to have on their minds. They feel, decisively, that they are under the tuition of a most uncommonly powerful and far-seeing spirit, that penetrates into the essences of things, and can also strongly define their forms and even their shadows—and that is quite in earnest to communicate, while they are equally in earnest to obtain, the most important principles which such a mind has deduced from a severe examination of a vast variety of facts and books. And yet there is some kind of haze in the medium through which this spirit transmits its light, or there is some vexatious dimness in the mental faculty of seeing: so that, looking back from the end of an essay, or of the volume, they really do not feel themselves in possession of any thing like the full value of as much ingenious, and sagacious, and richly-illustrated thinking as ever, probably, was contained in the same proportion of writing.

We would not set down much of the difficulty of comprehending so much complained of, to the *language*, so far as it is distinguishable from the thought; with the exception of here and there a scholastic phrase, and a certain degree of peculiarity in the use of one or two terms—especially *reason*, which he uses in a sense in which he endeavours to explain and prove, that all men are in equally full possession of the faculty which it denominates. Excepting so far as a slight tinge of antiqueness indicates the influence of our older writers, especially Milton and Bacon, on the complexion of our author's language, it is of a construction original in the greatest possible

degree. That it could not well be otherwise may easily be supposed, when, premising, as we have done, the originality of the author's manner of thinking, we observe that the diction is in a most extraordinary degree conformed to the thought. It lies, if we may so speak, close to the mental surface, with all its irregularities, throughout. It is therefore perpetually varying, in perfect flexibility and obsequiousness to the ideas ; and, without any rhetorical regulation of its changes, or apparent design, or consciousness in the writer, is in succession popular and scientific, familiar and magnificent, secular and theological, plain and poetical. It has none of the phrases or combinations of oratorical common-place : it has no settled and favourite appropriations of certain adjectives to certain substantives : its manner of expressing an idea once, gives the reader no guess how the same idea will be expressed when it comes modified by a different combination. The writer considers the whole congregation of words, constituting our language, as something so perfectly and independently his own, that he may make any kind of use of any part of it that his thinking requires. Almost every page, therefore, presents unusual combinations of words, that appear not so much made *for* the thought as made *by* it, and often give, if we may so express it, the very colour, as well as the substantial form, of the idea. There is no settled construction or cadence of the sentences ; no two, perhaps, of about the same length being constructed in the same manner. From the complexity and extended combination of the thought, they are generally long, which the author something less than half-apologizes for, and therefore something more than half-defends. We will quote what he says on this point.

“Doubtless, too, I have in some measure injured my style in respect to its facility and popularity, from having almost confined my reading, of late years, to the works of the ancients, and those of the elder writers in the modern languages. We insensibly admire what we habitually imitate ; and aversion to the epigrammatic unconnected periods of the fashionable *Anglo-Gallican* taste, has too often made me willing to forget, that the stately march and difficult evolutions, which characterize the eloquence of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, and Jeremy Taylor, are, notwithstanding their intrinsic excellence, still less suited to a periodical essay. This fault I am now endeavouring to correct, though I can never so far sacrifice my judgment to the desire of being immediately popular, as to cast my sentences in the French moulds, or affect a style which an ancient critic would have deemed purposely invented for persons troubled with asthma, to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the more pitiable

asthma of a short-witted intellect. It cannot but be injurious to the human mind never to be called into effort ; and the habit of receiving pleasure without any exercise of thought, by the mere excitement of curiosity and sensibility, may be justly ranked among the worst effects of novel-reading. It is true, that these short and unconnected sentences are easily and instantly understood : but it is equally true, that, wanting all the cement of thought as well as of style, all the connections, and (if you will forgive so trivial a metaphor) all the *hooks-and-eyes* of the memory, they are easily forgotten ; or rather, it is scarcely possible they should be remembered. Nor is it less true that those who confine their reading to such books, dwarf their own faculties, and finally reduce their understandings to a deplorable imbecility."—P. 166.

He might, in contradiction to the vulgar notion that long sentences *necessarily* show the author guilty of what is termed diffuseness, have added, that length of sentences furnishes a capital mean of being concise ; that, in fact, whoever is determined on the greatest possible parsimony of words, *must* write in long sentences, if there is any thing like combination in his thoughts. For, in a long sentence, several indispensable conditionalities, collateral notices, and qualifying or connecting circumstances, may be expressed by short members of the sentence, which must else be put in so many separate sentences ; thus making two pages of short sentences to express, and in a much less connected manner, what one well-constructed long sentence would have expressed in half a page :—and yet an unthinking reader might very possibly cite these two pages as a specimen of concise writing, and such a half page as a sample of diffuseness.

We had intended to make a few remarks on the several essays in this volume, considered as to their subjects ; and on the most prominent of the principles endeavoured to be illustrated and established. But we have dwelt so long on the more general qualities of its intellectual and literary character, that our readers will very willingly excuse us from prolonging a course of observations, in which we have by no means succeeded to our wish in the attempt to convey a general idea of the most extraordinary production that has, at any time, come under our official notice. We confess, too, that we should feel no small degree of diffidence in undertaking any thing like an analysis of disquisitions so abstruse, so little reduced to the formal arrangement of system, so interrupted and unfinished, and so often diverging to a great distance from the leading direction.

The subjects largely discussed are few. Among them are,

the duty and laws of communicating truth, including the liberty of the press ; the theories of the several most celebrated political philosophers, or schools of philosophers ; errors of party spirit ; vulgar errors respecting taxation ; the law of nations ; Paley's doctrine of general consequences as the foundation of the criterion of morality ; sketches of Sir Alexander Ball ; the proper discipline for rising, in point of intellectual freedom and vigour, above the general state of the age ; and several other topics of less comprehensive denomination. But no adequate guess can be made, from these denominations, at the variety and latitude of the inquiries and observations. There is not a great deal expressly on the subject of religion ; the intended statement of the author's general views of it having been delayed till the work prematurely closed ; but there are many occasional references in a spirit of great seriousness. He asserts the radical depravity, to a very great extent, of human nature, though in forms of language most widely different, to be sure, from that of orthodox sermons and bodies of divinity. As the basis, however, of some of his principles of moral philosophy, he claims a certain profound and half-mystical reverence for the mental and moral essence and organization of man, which we find it somewhat difficult to render. He is a most zealous assertor of free-agency. In one place the word Methodism is used exactly in the way in which it is employed by those whom the author knows to be fools, profligates, or bigots. He is perfectly apprized, how much of intelligent belief and ardent piety is comprehended within the tenets and the state of the affections, to which this term of opprobrium is generally applied ; and we were astonished therefore to see him so far consenting to adopt what he knew to be the lingo of irreligion.

A portion of his political reasonings and reflections, is retrospective to the times of the French revolution ; and distinguishes and censures, with very great judgment and eloquence, the respective errors of our aristocratic and democratic parties at that time. Some interesting references are made to the author's own views, and hopes, and projects at that period. As those views and projects had nothing to do with revolutions in England, we wish that some passages expressed in the tone of self-exculpation had been spared. It was no great harm, if a young man of speculative and ardent genius saw nothing in the political state of any country in Christendom to

prevent his wishing, that a new constitution of society could be tried somewhere in the wildernesses of America. In his professing to have very long since renounced the visionary ideas and wishes which, under various modifications of the notion and the love of liberty, elated so many superior minds in that eventful season, we were anxious to see him preserve the dignity of keeping completely clear of the opposite extreme of approving all things as they are—to see him preserve, in short, the lofty spirit in which he wrote, many years since, his sublime “Ode to France.” And there is in the work less to displease on that head, that in many instances of the “impetuous recoil” of men of talents from the principles of violent democracy. But we confess we have perceived a more favourable aspect than we should deem compatible with the spirit of a perfect moralist, philanthropist, and patriot, towards the present state of political institutions and practices. We should think that at least these are not times to extenuate the evil of enormous taxation ; to make light of the suggestion of the superior benefit of employing a given number of men rather in making canals and building bridges than in destructive military expeditions ; to celebrate the happiness of having the much greater part of a thousand millions of a national debt, and the attendant benefit of a paper-currency ; or to join in reprobating any party who are zealous for a reform of the legislature and political corruptions. There is, however, in the work, much acute speculation on political systems that has no direct reference to the practical politics of the day. It should be observed too, that, beyond all other political speculators, our author mingles important moral and philosophical principles with his reasonings.

The most of what may be called entertainment, may perhaps be found in a number of letters written from Germany by a young Englishman, who passed among his college companions by the name of Satyrane, and whom, if there were not so much said or implied in his praise, accompanied too by some slight expression as if he were not now surviving, we should mightily suspect to be no other than the author himself.

A whole number (the thirteenth) is occupied with the story of a tragical event that happened at Nuremberg, a little before Mr. Coleridge first saw that place. The principal personages were a baker's orphan and outcast daughter, and

a washerwoman. He is very particular in asserting the truth of the account ; but if he had not, we should have believed it nevertheless ; for the plain reason, that we think it surpasses the powers of fiction, the powers of invention of even Mr. Coleridge. No abstract can be given to make it at all intelligible ; but it is so strange, so horrible, and so sublime, that we should think meanly of the feelings of any person, who, after reading it, would not turn with indifference, from the comparative insipidity of any thing to be found in tragedy or romance.

We ought to have given a few extracts from the work ; but we did not know where to select them, amidst such a wilderness of uncommon ideas. Many other passages may be more interesting than the following representation of one of Luther's skirmishes with Satan, in the Wartburg, a castle near Eisenach, in which he was confined many months, by a friendly and provident force, and where our author was shown the black mark on the wall, produced, as every visitant is told, by the intrepid reformer's throwing his ink-stand at the enemy.

“ If this christian Hercules, this heroic cleanser of the Augean stable of apostacy, had been born and educated in the present age, or the preceding generation, he would doubtless have held himself for a man of genius and original power. But with this faith alone he would hardly have removed the mountains which he did remove. The darkness and superstition of the age, which required such a reformer, had moulded his mind for the reception of ideas concerning himself, better suited to inspire the strength and enthusiasm necessary for the task of reformation, ideas more in sympathy with the spirits whom he was to influence. He deemed himself gifted with supernatural impulses, an especial servant of heaven, a chosen warrior, fighting as the general of a small but faithful troop, against an army of evil beings, headed by the prince of the air. These were no metaphorical beings in his apprehension. He was a poet indeed, as great a poet as ever lived in any age or country ; but his poetic images were so vivid that they mastered the poet's own mind. He was possessed with them, as with substances distinct from himself : Luther did not write, he *acted* poems. The Bible was a spiritual indeed, but not a *figurative armory*, in his behalf ; it was the magazine of his warlike stores, and from thence he was to arm himself, and supply both shield, and sword, and javelin, to the elect. Methinks I see him sitting, the heroic student in the Wartburg, with his midnight lamp before him, seen by the late traveller in the plain *Bischofsroda*, as a star on the mountain. Below it lies the Hebrew Bible open, on which he gazes, his brow pressing on his palm, brooding over some obscure text, which he desires to make plain to the simple boor, and to the humble artisan, and to transfer its whole force into their own natural and living tongue. And he himself does not understand it ! Thick darkness lies on the original text : he counts the letters,

he calls up the roots of each separate word, and questions them as the familiar spirits of an oracle. In vain : thick darkness continues to cover it ! not a ray of meaning darts through it. With sullen and angry hope he reaches for the Vulgate, his old and sworn enemy, the treacherous confederate of the Roman anti-Christ, which he so gladly, when he can, rebukes for idolatrous falsehoods, which had dared place

‘ Within the sanctuary itself their shrines
Abominations !’—

Now—O thought of humiliation—he must entreat its aid. See ! there has the sly spirit of apostacy worked in a phrase, which favours the doctrine of purgatory, the intercession of saints, or the efficacy of prayers for them. And what is worse than all, the interpretation is plausible. The original Hebrew might be forced into this meaning : and no other meaning seems to lie *in* it, none to hover *over* it in the heights of allegory, none to lurk *beneath* it even in the depths of Cabala ! This is the work of the tempter ! It is a cloud of darkness, conjured up between the truth of the sacred letters and the eyes of his understanding, by the malice of the evil one, and for a trial of his faith ! Must he then confess, must he subscribe the name of Luther to an exposition which consecrates a weapon for the hand of the idolatrous hierarchy ? Never ! never !

“ There still remains one auxiliary in reserve, the translation of the Seventy. The Alexandrine Greeks, anterior to the church itself, could intend no support to its corruptions—the Septuagint will have profaned the altar of truth with no incense for the nostrils of the universal bishop to snuff up. And here again his hopes are baffled ! Exactly at this perplexed passage had the Greek translator given his understanding a holiday, and made his pen supply its place. O honoured Luther, as easily mightest thou convert the whole city of Rome, with the pope and the conclave of cardinals inclusive, as strike a spark of light from the words, and nothing but words, of the Alexandrine version. Disappointed, despondent, enraged, ceasing to *think*, yet continuing his brain on the stretch, in solicitation of a thought, and gradually giving himself up to angry fancies, to recollections of past persecutions, to uneasy fears and inward defiance, and floating images of the evil being, their supposed personal author, he sinks, without perceiving it, into a trance of slumber ; during which his brain retains its waking energies, excepting that what would have been mere *thoughts* before, now (the action and counterweight of his outward senses, and their impressions being withdrawn) shape and condense themselves into *things*, into realities ! Repeatedly half-waking, and his eye-lids as often re-closing, the objects which really surround him form the place and scenery of his dream. All at once he sees the arch-fiend coming forth on the wall of the room, from the very spot, perhaps, on which his eyes had been fixed vacantly during the perplexed moments of his former meditation ; the inkstand, which he had at the same time been using, becomes associated with it ; and in that struggle of rage, which in these distempered dreams almost constantly precedes the helpless terror by the pain of which we are finally awakened, he *imagines* that he hurls it at the intruder, or not improbably in the first instant of awakening, while yet both his imagination and his eyes are possessed by the dream, he *actually* hurls it. Some weeks after, perhaps, during which he had often mused on the incident, undetermined whether to deem it a visitation of Satan to

him in the body or out of the body, he discovers the dark spot on the wall, and receives it as a sign and pledge to him of the event having actually taken place."—P. 125.

We cannot conclude without expressing an earnest wish, that this original thinker and eloquent writer may be persuaded to put the literary public speedily in possession, by successive volumes of essays, of an ample portion of those refined speculations, the argument and the strongest illustrations of which he is well known to have in an almost complete state in his mind—and many of which will never be in any other mind, otherwise than as communicated from him. The chief alteration desirable, for his readers' sake, to be made in his mode of writing, is a resolute restriction on that mighty profusion and excursiveness of thought, in which he is tempted to suspend the pursuit and retard the attainment of the one distinct object which should be clearly kept in view ; and, added to this, a more patient and prolonged effort to reduce the abstruser part of his ideas as much as their subtle quality will possibly admit, to a substantial and definable form.

From another critique on COTTLE'S "RECOLLECTIONS OF COLERIDGE," the concluding paragraphs are extracted ; because they furnish Mr. Foster's complete portrait of that philosopher.

Coleridge's religious opinions are interspersed or interwoven through a wide extent of all sorts of subjects and speculations. We are not aware of Mr. Cottle's authority for expecting "a great posthumous work, to elucidate and establish the everlasting principles of Christian truth, and to exhibit a system of Christian Ethics."—If the work should actually appear, it will be a signally remarkable and memorable phenomenon, as combining a far greater variety of properties, and what may be called colours, than any other of the class. It will be learned, historical, philosophical, metaphysical, scholastical,* subtle, profound, fanciful, mystical, poetical in il-

* Coleridge is remembered to have said that he had read *all* Thomas Aquinas ; a most enormous hyperbole, of course. Apart from the formidable array of that miraculous Doctor's other writings, let any one look at or into the gigantic volume of the *Summa Theologia*, built up of myriads of logical ingenuities, conflicting arguments, distinctions real and unreal,

illustration, and strongly tinged with the phraseology unfortunately acquired from the German academics. The work cannot fail to contain much that will be valuable ; but still, as to the truth and authority of the Christian religion, we are tempted to ask what new lights can be shed, what more valid arguments can be produced, what quietus of controversy, what fiery element for blasting the fallacies of scepticism ?

But another work was repeatedly announced by him as on the point of coming into the light, under the title of *Elements of Discourse*, purporting to be something like a new system of logic. And here again, whatever new arrangements, whatever transfers or partitions of provinces, a revolutionary hand may impose on logic as a technical science, we may be permitted to doubt whether any great *practical* improvements can be brought to the economy of thinking, after we have been so long familiarly in the company of the most effective thinkers that ever lived, or that human nature is capable of producing. Nor, with all our respect for intellectual endowments so eminently extraordinary, can we rid ourselves of the impression that our logical reformer's own example is far from affording an auspicious omen.

There may be those who, from patient attention, great effort, and unusual mental strength in making that effort, have the consciousness of a satisfactory understanding of the tenour of his speculations. They could perhaps give them back, point by point, in language of their own. But assuredly a very great proportion of his readers, of at least moderate and not unexercised intellect, find themselves grievously at a loss in parts, and unsuccessful on the whole. There has, indeed, been no little affectation in the matter. Not a few, aware of the writer's great fame, unwilling to seem deficient in capacity, and perhaps really admiring particular parts of his works, have concealed their consciousness of being often baffled in the study, under a dissembling show of applause, while they would have shrunk from the test of having to state the exact import of what they had read.

For one thing, it is quite obvious that Coleridge, after setting before his readers the theme, the *one* theme apparently,

on all things in existence, in possibility, and in neither the one nor the other. Coleridge added, that he could give a general view of the speculations of the schoolmen. But this he might do from Brucker.

undertaken to be elucidated, could not, or would not, proceed in a straight forward course of explanation, argument, and appropriate illustration from fancy ; keeping in sight before him a certain ultimate object ; and placing marks, as it were, of the steps and stages of the progress. He takes up a topic which we much desire to see examined, a question which we should be glad to see disposed of, and begins with good promise in preparatory observations, but, after a short advance, the train of discussion appears to lose or abandon its direction ; veers off arbitrarily, or at the call of accident ; complicates what should be the immediate question with secondary, relative, or even quite foreign matters ; arrests itself, perhaps, in a philological dissertation on a particular term that comes in the way ; resumes, nominally, at an interval, the leading purpose ; but with a ready propensity to stray again into any collateral track, and thence into the next, and the next ; till at last we come out as from an enchanted wood ; hardly knowing whither, and certainly not knowing how to retrace the mazy course ; having seen, it is true, divers remarkable objects, and glimpses to a distance on either hand ; but not having obtained the one thing which we imagined we were conducted to pursue. When we have asked ourselves, Now what is the result, as to the purpose we started with in such excellent company ? we could not tell.

We have sometimes felt as if our instructor were playing the necromancer with us ; causing shapes of intelligence to come before us as if ready to reveal the secrets we were inquiring about ; but making them vanish when they were opening the semblance of a mouth ; again bringing them or others, grave and bearded, or of more pleasant visage ; and when they are getting into hopeful utterance, presto, they are gone. Or perchance, if sometimes permitted to say on, it may happen that they emit such an oracle that we are in danger of muttering, after a pause, "There needeth no ghost to tell us that."

Another too evident characteristic of his writing is what we may denominate an *arbitrary abstruseness*. No doubt, the extreme subtlety and abstraction of his speculation at one time, and its far reach at another,—the recondite principles and remote views in which he delighted to contemplate a subject—must necessarily and inevitably throw somewhat of a character of obscurity, indistinctness, shall we say *unreality*, over his intellectual creations, as looked upon by minds of but mo-

derate perspicacity and discipline. But still, we think he might have forced them up, if we may so express it, into a more palpable form; might have presented them more in relief and nearer to the eye; so that their substances, figure, junctures, transitions, should have been more distinct, more *real* to the reader's perception. Instead of being content to trace out and note the mental process just as he performed it *for himself*, in his own peculiar manner, and requiring to be understood on his own conditions (the *whole* of the accommodation and adaptation for understanding him being on the part and at the cost of the student, who was to be despised if he failed) he might at least have met the student half way, by working his thoughts into a cast more like the accustomed manner of shaping and expressing ideas among thinking men. When the reader thinks he has mastered the full meaning of a section or paragraph, he feels confident that the portion of thought *might* be put in a more perspicuous form, without injury to even a refinement in any part of its consistence; and that it would have been so in the hands of Hume, for example, or Stewart. But Coleridge seems resolute to carry on his process at the greatest distance from the neighbourhood of common thinking. Or if the plain nature of the subject compels him to perform it nearer at hand, he must, lest any thing should be vulgarly tangible, make every substance under operation fly off in gas.

Not a little of the obscurity complained of may be owing to the strange dialect which he fabricated for himself, partly of his own invention, and partly from the German terminology; which never will or can be naturalized in English literature, whatever efforts are making, or to be made, to deprave our language with it—an impossibility at which, as plain Englishmen, we sincerely rejoice. If the *greater part* of the philosophy, for which it was constructed as the vehicle, shall keep its distance too, so much the better. That inseparable vehicle itself will debar it (and Coleridge is a proof) from all chance of extensive acceptance.

Notwithstanding all these animadversions, it were little better than an impertinence to say that his writings (we make no reference to the beauties of his poetry) contain, though unfortunately in such a scattered miscellaneous disorder, very much that is admirable and valuable. There are acute and just discriminations, profound reflections, sagacious conjectures, and felicitous images, without number. In portions and pas-

sages no professed disciple can admire him more than we do.

It is cause for great regret, that a mind so powerful, original, and amply furnished, should have been withheld, by a combination of causes, including those of which we have attempted a slight indication, from taking that primary rank in philosophy and literature, for which nature seemed to have designed it. We have not the means to know what may have been the effect and extent of his influence in the secondary mode, of his personal communications with many able men. But as regarded solely in the capacity of an author, he is (hitherto) one of the most remarkable instances in history, of the disproportion between splendid talents and success, in the ordinary sense of success, with the cultivated portion of the public.

IV.

FOX'S JAMES II.

History of the early Part of the Reign of James the Second; with an Introductory Chapter. By the Right Hon. CHARLES JAMES FOX. *To which is added An Appendix.*

MANY of our celebrated countrymen will always be recollected with regret, by persons who take the most serious view of human characters and affairs; but there is no name in the English records of the past century, that excites in us so much of this feeling as that of the author of this work. The regret arises from the consideration of what such a man might have been, and might have done. As to talents, perhaps no eminent man was ever the subject of so little controversy, or ever more completely deterred even the most perverse spirit of singularity from hazarding a hint of doubt or dissent, by the certainty of becoming utterly ridiculous. To pretend to talk of any superior man was the same thing, except among a few of the tools or dupes of party, as to name generals to whom Hannibal, or Scipio, or Julius Cæsar ought to have been but second in command; or poets from whose works the mind must descend to those of Shakspeare and Milton. If all political partialities could be suspended in forming the judgment, we suppose the great majority of intelligent men would pronounce Fox the greatest orator of modern times! and they would be careful to fix the value of this verdict by observing, that they used the term orator in the most dignified sense in which it can be understood. Other speakers have had more of what is commonly and perhaps not improperly called brilliance, more novelty and luxuriance of imagery, more sudden flashes, points, and surprises, and vastly more magnificence of language. Burke especially was such a speaker; and during his oration, the man of intelligence and taste was delighted to enthusiasm, in feeling that something so new as to defy all conjectural anticipation was sure to burst on him at every fourth or fifth sentence, and in beholding a thousand

forms and phantoms of thought, as if suddenly brought from all parts of the creation, most luckily and elegantly associated with a subject to which no mortal had ever imagined that any one of them could have been related before. Yet this very auditor, if he had wished to have a perplexing subject luminously simplified, or a vast one contracted, according to a just scale, to his understanding ; if he had wished to put himself in distinct possession of the strongest arguments for maintaining the same cause in another place ; if he had been anxious to qualify himself for immediate action in an affair in which he had not yet been able to satisfy himself in deliberation ; or if he had been desirous for his coadjutors in any important concern to have a more perfect comprehension of its nature, and a more absolute conviction as to the right principles and measures to be adopted respecting it, than all his efforts could give them, he would have wished, beyond all others, to draw Fox's mind to bear on the subject. For ourselves, we think we never heard any man who dismissed us from the argument on a debated topic with such a feeling of satisfied and final conviction, or such a competence to tell why we were convinced. There was, in the view in which subjects were placed by him, something like the day-light, that simple clearness which makes things conspicuous and does not make them glare, which adds no colour or form, but purely makes visible in perfection the real colour and form of all things round ; a kind of light less amusing than that of magnificent lustres or a thousand coloured lamps, and less fascinating and romantic than that of the moon, but which is immeasurably preferred when we are bent on sober business, and not at leisure, or not in the disposition, to wander delighted among beautiful shadows and delusions. It is needless to say that Fox possessed, in a high degree, wit and fancy ; but superlative intellect was the grand distinction of his eloquence ; the pure force of sense, of plain downright sense, was so great that it would have given a character of sublimity to his eloquence, even if it had never once been aided by a happy image or a brilliant explosion. The grandeur of plain sense, would not have been deemed an absurd phrase, by any man who had heard one of Fox's best speeches.

And as to the moral features of the character, all who knew him concur in ascribing to him a candour, a good nature, simplicity of manners, and an energy of feeling, which made him no less interesting as a friend, and might have made him no less noble as a philanthropist, than he was admirable as a senator.

We have very often surrendered our imagination to the interesting, but useless and painful employment, of tracing out the career which might have been run by a man thus pre-eminently endowed. We have imagined him first rising up, through a youth of unrivalled promise, to the period of maturity, unstained by libertinism, scorning to think for one moment of a competition with the heroes of Bond-street, or any other class of the minions of fashion, and maintaining the highest moral principles in contempt of the profligacy which pressed close around him. It is an unfortunate state of mind in any reader of these pages, whose risibility is excited when we add to the sketch that solemn reverence for the Deity, and expectation of a future judgment, without which it is a pure matter of fact that there is no such thing on earth as an invincible and universal virtue. Instead of unbounded licentiousness, our imaginary young statesman has shown his contempt of parsimony, by the most generous modes of expense which humanity could suggest, and his regard for the softer sex, by appropriating one of the best and most interesting of them in the fidelity of the tenderest relation. We have imagined him employing the time which other young men of rank and spirit gave to dissipation, in a strenuous prosecution of moral and political studies; and yet mingling so far with men of various classes, as to know intimately of what materials society and governments are composed. We have imagined him as presenting himself at length on the public scene, with an air and a step analogous and rival to the aspect and sinew of the most powerful combatant that ever entered the field of Olympia.

At this entrance on public action, we have viewed him solemnly determining to make absolute principle the sole rule of his conduct in every instance, to the last sentence he should speak or write on public affairs; to give no pledges, and make no concessions, to any party whatever; to expose and prosecute, with the same unrelenting justice, the generally equal corruption of ministries and oppositions; to co-operate with any party in the particular case in which he should judge it in the right, and in all other cases to protest impartially against them all; and to say the whole truth, when other pretended friends of public virtue and the people durst only to say the half, for fear of provoking an examination of their own conduct, or for fear of absolutely shutting the door against all

chance of future advancement. We view him holding up to contempt the artifices and intrigues of statesmen, and hated abundantly for his pains, no doubt, but never in danger of a retaliation of exposure. He would not have submitted to be found in the society of even the very highest persons in the state, on any other terms of intercourse than those of virtue and wisdom; he would have felt it a duty peculiarly sacred and cogent to make his most animated efforts to counteract any corruption which he might perceive finding its way into such society, and if those efforts failed, to withdraw himself so entirely as to be clear of all shadow of responsibility. Virtue of this quality would be in little hazard of afflicting any government with a violent impatience to have the man for a coadjutor, and therefore our imagination never placed him oftener or longer in any of the high offices of state, than about such a space as Fox was actually so privileged; indeed, a considerably shorter time; for even had it been possible that any set of men would have acceded at first to such conditions of coalition as he would have insisted on, there could hardly have failed to arise, in the course of a month or two, some question on which this high and inflexible virtue must have dissented so totally, and opposed so strenuously, as to have necessitated, on the one part or the other, a relinquishment of office; and it could not be doubtful one instant on which part this surrender must take place, when the alternative lay between a man of pure virtue and the ordinary tribe of statesmen. But office would not have been requisite to the influence of such a heroic and eloquent patriot. Our imagination has represented him as not only maintaining, in the public council of the nation, the cause of justice in all its parts, sometimes with the support of other men of talents, and sometimes without it, but also as a feeling that his public duty extended much beyond all the efforts he could make in that place. As it is absurd to expect integrity in a government, while the people are too ignorant or too inattentive to form any right judgment of its proceedings, and as no person in the whole country would have been so qualified to present before it simple and comprehensive illustrations of its situation and interests, or would indeed have been a tenth part so much attended to, we have imagined him publishing from time to time instructions to the people, in the form of large tracts, stating, with all his unequalled clearness and comprehension, the duties of the

people with respect to the conduct of government, and the nature and tendency of the important questions and measures of the times, with an anxious and reiterated effort to impart just views on the general topics of political science, such as the rights of the people, the foundation of the authority of governments, the principles of taxation, and peace and war. If these great duties allowed any time for the more formal schemes of literary performance, he might have taken up some period of the English or any other history, which afforded the best occasions for illustrating the most interesting points of political truth, and forming a set of permanent national lessons. But we could almost have regretted to see him so engaged, since very often the ascertaining of some very inconsiderable fact, or the unravelling of some perplexity, which, though of consequence possibly to the completeness of the history, is not of the smallest importance to its use, must have consumed the labour and time which might have produced a powerful illustration of some subject immediately momentous to the public welfare, and prevented more mischief than all histories of England ever did good.

During this whole career, the favourite of our imagination keeps far aloof from all personal turpitude ; and Howard was just as capable of insulting misery, or John de Witte of carrying on a paltry intrigue, or Eustace St. Pierre of betraying his fellow-citizens, as our statesman of mingling with the basest refuse of human nature at Newmarket and the gambling house, not to mention houses of any other description. We should have suspected ourselves of some feverish dream or transient delirium, if our fancy had ever dared so monstrous a representation, as that of the eloquence which could fascinate and enlighten every tender and every intelligent friend, and influence senates whose decrees would influence the destinies of the world, expending itself in discussions with jockies, and debates with black-legs ; of the intellect which could hold the balance of national contests, or devise schemes for the benefit of all mankind, racked with calculations on dice and cards ; of the vehement accuser of public prodigality transferring thousands upon thousands, at the cost of these dice and cards, to wretches who deserve to be cauterized out of the body politic, without making, at the same time, any very careful inquiry, whether the claims of all his industrious tradesmen had been satisfied. If the virtue of other states-

men and patriots was found melting away in the arms of wantons, or suffocated with the fumes of wine, or reduced to that last consummation of dishonour, a subscription of friends to repair a fortune dissipated in the most ignoble uses, our patriot would have been incensed that such men should presume to make speeches against corruption, and profane the name of public virtue.

If, in pursuing his career to a conclusion, we placed him in office towards the close of his life, we beheld him most earnest, we will say devoutly earnest, to render the last part of his course more useful than all that had preceded, by a bold application of those principles which he had maintained through life, to the purposes in which alone they can be of any use, the practical schemes of reform; and if he found it impossible to effect, or even to propose, those reforms he had so many thousand times averred to be essential to the safety of the state, indignantly abandoning, before death summoned him, all concern in political office, with an honest, and public, and very loud declaration, of its incurable corruption. In virtue of the privilege belonging to all creators of fictitious personages, we should certainly have invoked death to a premature removal of our favourite, if we could have fancied the remotest possibility that he might, in the last, and what ought to be the most illustrious period of his life, sink into the silent witness of aggravated and rapidly progressive corruptions, the approver of oppressive taxes on people of slender means, and the eloquent defender of sinecures held by lords. But we could not suffer the thought, that the personage whose course we had followed through every triumph of virtue, could at last, for the sake of a few sickly months of office, deny his degraded country the consolation of being able to cite, after he was gone, the name of one consistent and unconquerable patriot at least, in contrast to the legion of domestic spoilers and betrayers; or refuse himself the laurels which were ready to be conferred on him by the hand of death: no, we beheld him retaining to the last stage, the same decisive rectitude which ennobled all the preceding; and after humbly committing to the Divine mercy, in the prospect of soon removing to a state for which no tumults of public life had ever been suffered to interrupt his anxious preparation, realizing what the poet predicted of a former statesman,

“ ‘ Oh, save my country, Heaven ! ’ shall be thy last.”

How pensive has been the sentiment with which we have said, all this is no more than what Fox might have been : nor has this feeling been in the least beguiled by the splendour of all the eulogiums, by the fragrance of all the incense, conferred and offered since his death. His name stands conspicuous on the list of those, who have failed to accomplish the commission on which their wonderful endowments would seem to tell that they had been sent to the world, by the Master of human and all other spirits. It is thus that mankind are doomed to see a succession of individuals rising among them, with capacities for rendering them the most inestimable services, but faithless, for the most part, to their high vocation, and either never attempting the generous labours which invite their talents, or combining with these labours the vices which frustrate their efficacy. Our late distinguished statesman's exertions for the public welfare were really so great, and in many instances, we have no doubt, so well intended, that it is peculiarly painful to behold him defrauding such admirable powers and efforts of their effect, by means of those parts of his conduct in which he sunk to a level with the least respectable of mankind ; and we think no man within our memory has given so melancholy an example of this self-counteraction. It is impossible for the friends of our constitution and of human nature not to feel a warm admiration for Fox's exertions, whatever their partial motives and whatever their occasional excesses might be, in vindication of the great principles of liberty, in hostility to the rage for war, and in extirpation of the slave-trade. This last abomination, which had gradually lost, even on the basest part of the nation, that hold which it had for a while maintained by a delusive notion of policy, and was fast sinking under the hatred of all that could pretend to humanity or decency, was destined ultimately to fall by his hand, at a period so nearly contemporary with the end of his career, as to give the remembrance of his death somewhat of a similar advantage of association to that, by which the death of the Hebrew champion is always recollected in connexion with the fall of Dagon's temple. A great object was accomplished, and it is fair to attribute the event, in no small degree, to his persevering support of that most estimable individual who was the leader of the design : but as to his immense display of talent on the wide ground of general politics, on the theory of true

freedom, and popular rights ; on the great and increasing influence of the crown ; on the corruption and reform of public institutions ; on severe investigation of public expenditure ; on the national vigilance proper to be exercised over the conduct of government ; and on the right of any nation to change, when it judges necessary, both the persons and the form of its government ; we have observed with the deepest mortification, times without number, the very slight and transient effect on the public mind of a more argumentative and luminous eloquence, than probably we are ever again to see irradiating those subjects, and urging their importance. Both principles and practices, tending toward arbitrary power and national degradation, were progressively gaining ground during the much greater part of the time that he was assaulting them with fire and sword ; and the people, notwithstanding it was their own cause that he was maintaining by this persevering warfare, though they were amused indeed with his exploits, could hardly be induced to regard him otherwise than as a capital prize-fighter, and scarcely thanked him for the fortitude and energy which he devoted to their service. He was allowed to be a most admirable man for a leader of opposition, but not a mortal could be persuaded to regard that opposition, even in his hands, as bearing any resemblance to that which we have been accustomed to ascribe to Cato, an opposition of which pure virtue was the motive, and all corruptions whatever the object. If the very same things which were said by Fox, had been advanced by the person whose imaginary character we have sketched in the preceding pages, they would have become the oracles of the people from Berwick to Land's End ; corrupters and intriguers would have felt an impression of awe when he rose to speak ; no political doctors or nostrums could have cured their nerves of a strange vibration at the sound of his words, a vibration very apt to reach into their consciences or their fears ; there would have been something mysterious and appalling in his voice, a sound as if a multitude of voices articulated in one ; and though his countenance should have looked as candid and friendly as Fox's did, these gentlemen would have been sometimes subject to certain fretful peevish lapses of imagination much like those in which Macbeth saw the apparition of Banquo, and would have involuntarily apostrophised him as the dreaded agent of detection and retribution. They would

have felt themselves in the presence of their master, for they would have been taught to recognise, in this one man, the most real representative of the people, whose *will* would generally be soon declared as substantially identical with his *opinions*.

How then did it come to pass, that Fox had no such influence on the national mind, or on the government? The answer is perfectly obvious, and it forms a very serious admonition to all patriots who really wish to promote the welfare of the people, by an opposition to corruptions of the state. The talents, and the long and animated exertions, of the most eloquent of all our countrymen failed, plainly because the people placed no confidence in his virtue; or in other words, because they would never be persuaded to attribute virtue to his character.

A signal notoriety of dissipation accompanied the outset of his public career. While the political party which he opposed might be very reasonably astonished that the engagements of the turf, of the bagnio, and of the sanctuaries dedicated to the enshrined and associated imps of chance and fraud, should seem to divert no part of the energy with which they were attacked in their quarters at St. Stephen's, and while the tribes of bloods, bucks, rakes, and other worthy denominations and fraternities might be proud to have for their leader a genius, who could at the same time beat so many gray-beards of the state on their own ground, the sober part of the nation deplored or despised, according to the more generous or more cynical character of the individuals, the splendid talent which could degrade itself to so much folly and immorality. Too great a share of the same fatal reputation attended the distinguished statesman, with whatever truth, during the much greater part of his life. We say, with whatever truth; for we know no more of his private history than what has been without contradiction circulated in the talk and the printed chronicles of scandal; with exaggerations and fictions, no doubt; but no public man can have such a reputation without having substantially such a character. And by a law, as deep in human nature as any of its principles of distinction between good and evil, it is impossible to give respect or confidence to a man who habitually disregards some of the primary ordinances of morality. The nation never confided in our eloquent statesman's integrity; those who ad-

mired every thing in his talents, and much in his qualities, regretted that his name never ceased to excite in their minds the idea of gamesters and bacchanals, even after he was acknowledged to have withdrawn himself from such society. Those who held his opinions, were almost sorry that he should have held them, while they saw with what malicious exultation they who rejected them could cite his moral reputation, in place of argument, to invalidate them. In describing this unfortunate effect of the character, we are simply asserting known matter of fact. There is not one advocate of the principles or of the man, who has not to confess what irksome and silencing rebuffs he has experienced in the form of reference to moral character; we have observed it continually for many years, in every part of England which we have frequented; and we have seen practical and most palpable proof, that no man, even of the highest talents, can ever acquire, or at least retain, much influence on the public mind in the character of remonstrant and reformer, without the reality, or at any rate the invulnerable reputation, of virtue, in the comprehensive sense of the word, as comprising every kind of morality prescribed by the highest moral code acknowledged in a Christian nation. Public men and oppositionists may inveigh against abuses, and parade in patriotism, as long as they please; they will find that even one manifest vice will preclude all public confidence in their principles, and therefore render futile the strongest exertions of talent; a slight flaw, in otherwise the best tempered blade of Toledo, will soon expose the baffled wight that wields it to either the scorn or pity of the spectators, and to the victorious arm of his antagonist. It has possibly been said, that a man may maintain nice principles of integrity in the prosecution of public affairs, though his conscience and practice are very defective in matters of private morality. But this would never be believed, even if it were true: the universal conviction of mankind rejects it when it is attempted, in practical cases, to be made the foundation of confidence. So far is this from being believed, that even a conspicuous and complete reformation of private morals, if it be but recent, is still an unsatisfactory security for public virtue; and a very long probation of personal character is indispensable, as a kind of quarantine for a man once deeply contaminated to undergo, in order to engage any real confidence in the integrity of his public conduct; nor can he ever

engage it in the same degree, as if a uniform and resolute virtue had marked his private conduct from the beginning. But even if it were admitted, that all the virtues of the statesman might flourish in spite of the vices of the man, it would have been of no use, as an argument for confidence in the integrity of Fox's principles as a statesman, after the indelible stigma which they received in the famous coalition with Lord North. In what degree that portion of the people, that approved Fox's political opinions, really confided in his integrity as a firm and consistent statesman, was strongly brought to the proof, at the time of his appointment as one of the principals of the late administration. His admirers in general expressed their expectations in terms of great reserve; they rather wished, then absolutely dared, to believe, that it was impossible he should not prefer a fidelity to those great principles and plans of extensive reform, which he had so strenuously inculcated, to any office or associates in office that should require the sacrifice of those plans, and that he would not surely have taken a high official station, without some stipulations for carrying them, at least partially, into effect. But they recollected the tenour of his life; and though they were somewhat disappointed, and deeply grieved, to find him at his very entrance on office proposing and defending one of the rankest abuses, and afterwards inviolably keeping the peace with the grand total of abuses, in both the domestic and the Indian government, they did, at least many of them, confess, that they had always trembled for the consequence of bringing to such an ordeal a political integrity which, while they had sometimes for a moment almost half believed in it, they had always been obliged to refer to some far different principle from a firm personal morality, supported by a religious conscience.

We have remarked on the slight hold which our great orator had on the mind of the nation at large; it was mortifying also to observe, how little ascendancy his prodigious powers maintained over the minds of senators and ministers. It was irksome to witness that air of easy indifference, with which his most poignant reproaches were listened to; that readiness of reply to his nervous representations of the calamities or injustice of war; the carelessness often manifested while he was depicting the distresses of the people: and the impudent gayety and sprightliness with which arrant corruption could show,

and defend, and applaud itself in his presence. It is not for us to pretend to judge of what materials ministers and senators are composed; but we did often think, that if eloquence of such intensity, and so directed, had been corroborated in its impetus by the authoritative force which severe virtue can give to the stroke of talent, some of them would have been repressed into a very different kind of feeling and manners from those which we had the mortification to behold: we did think that, a man thus armed at once with the spear and the ægis, might have caused it to be felt, by stress of dire compulsion, "How awful goodness is."

On the whole, we shall always regard Fox as a memorable and mournful example of a gigantic agent, at once determined to labour for the public, and dooming himself to labour almost in vain. Our estimate of his talents precludes all hope or fear of any second example of such powerful labours, or such humiliating failure of effect. We wish the greatest genius on earth, whoever he may be, might write an inscription for our eminent statesman's monument, to express, in the most strenuous of all possible modes of thought and phrase, the truth and the warning, that no man will ever be accepted to serve mankind in the highest departments of utility, without an eminence of virtue that can sustain him in the noble defiance, Which of you convicts me of sin?

We can see that a good life of Fox will never be given to the public. If his biography is written by any of his intimate friends, who alone possess competent materials, they will suppress, and may even be excused on the ground of affection and propriety for suppressing, many things which are of the very vitality of the character. The historian of such a man ought to be at once knowing, philosophical, and impressed with the principles of religion; and it may easily be guessed whether such a writer is likely to be found, or likely, if he were found, to be put in possession of all the requisite information. We must notice a sentence in Lord Holland's preface. (P. xlv.)

"It is true, that at the melancholy period of his death, advantage was taken of the interest excited by all that concerned him, to impose upon the public a variety of memoirs and anecdotes (in the form of pamphlets,) as unfounded in fact, as they were painful to his friends and injurious to his memory. The confident pretensions with which many of those publications were ushered into the world, may have given them some little circulation at the time, but the internal evidence of their falsehood was

sufficiently strong to counteract any impression which their contents might be calculated to produce. It is not therefore with a view of exposing such misrepresentation, that any authentic account of the life of Mr. Fox can be deemed necessary."

His Lordship is quite mistaken. These publications have produced a permanent effect on the generality of their readers. They may not indeed implicitly believe every particular these pamphlets contain, but there is not one reader in twenty that doubts of their being mainly true. How should the case be otherwise? Persons remote from the sphere of Mr. Fox's acquaintance, can detect no internal evidence of falsehood. They have all heard anecdotes, which they have never heard contradicted, of his earlier habits, adventures, companions, and places of resort; and when they are furnished with a large addition of what seems to them quite of a piece with what they have heard or read before, how are they to perceive any internal evidence of falsehood? or who can blame them for believing straight forward, if there be no contradiction between one part of the production they are reading and another, and no material contradiction between the several productions they happen to meet with? The substance of these pamphlets is so settled in the minds of the great majority of their readers, as the true history and character of Mr. Fox, that a formal work from one of his friends would have no small difficulty in displacing the belief. They will judge, however, whether they ought not to attempt it, and whether justice to him be not a superior consideration to any points of delicacy relating to his surviving associates or opponents in political concerns.

"Telling the story of those times," was Mr. Fox's description of history. But if we try, by a strong effort of imagination, to carry ourselves back to any given period of past times, and if we take back along with us the history which professes to tell the story, it will be striking to consider how little it is in the power of history to perform. Let our own country be the scene, and any past age the time. That country at the time, perhaps, contained seven or eight millions of human beings. Each one of these had his employments, interests, and schemes, his pleasures and sufferings, his accidents and adventures, his youth and the changes of advancing life; and these pleasurable and painful interests had an infinite importance to the individual whose thoughts they filled, and whose heart they elated

or afflicted. Of this immense crowd, and all their distinct, their anxious, and, in their own view, eventful courses of life, history knows nothing. Incalculable thousands, therefore, and tens of thousands, of emotions of joy and agony, of ardent hopes, of romantic schemes, of interesting disclosures, of striking dialogues, of strange incidents, of deep-laid plots, of fatal catastrophes, of scenes of death, that have had their place and their hour, that have been to certain human creatures the most important circumstances in the world at the time, and collectively have constituted the real state of the people, could not be saved, and cannot be redeemed, from sinking in oblivion. This vast crowd of beings have lived in the social and yet separating economy of families, and thus have been under an infinite number of distinct polities, each of which have experienced innumerable fluctuations, as to agreement or discord, as to resources, number, cultivation, relative sorrows or satisfactions, and intercourse, alliances or quarrels, with the neighbouring little domestic states. All this, too, though constituting at all times so great a part of the moral condition of the good and evil of the community, is incapable of being brought within the cognizance of history. There are larger subdivisions of the nation, yet still so small as to be very numerous, into the inhabitants of villages and towns, with all the local interests and events of each ; and even these are for the most part invisible in the narrow sketch of the history of a nation. We may add all the train of events and interests connected with religious associations, with the different employments of the people, with civil and literary professions, and with all the departments of studious life, together with the lighter, but both characteristic and influential course of amusements and fashions.

No one ever wished to see the world so literally filled with books as to leave no room for the grass and corn to grow, nor therefore regretted that a host of writers of superhuman knowledge and facility had not been appointed to record all the things interesting to individuals, or families, or districts, that have been done or said in a whole nation during centuries ; but it is at the same time to be acknowledged, that nothing really deserving to be called a history of a nation can be written, unless a historian could exhibit something that should be a true and correct miniature of what has thus been an almost boundless assemblage of moral being and agency. He must,

in description, reduce this vast assemblage of particulars to some general abstract, which shall give the true measures of all the kinds of good and evil that have existed in a whole nation at the assigned period ; and he must contrive some mode of narration that shall relate, as one course of action, the whole agency of millions of separate, and diversified, and often mutually-opposing agents. But how is all this to be done ? The historian does not know a ten-thousandth part of all those facts of good and evil among individuals, the collective amount of which formed the moral character and condition of any people during any given period, and which collective amount he is required to ascertain as he proceeds, and to give in a continued abstract ; nor, indeed, if he could know so vast an assemblage, would it be possible for him so to combine and compare all these things together, as to make any true abstract and estimate of the whole ; nor if he could make such a summary estimate, would it be of any material value, as thus divested of all particular appropriation to individuals, and given as the description of the character and state of an imaginary being called a nation. A nation having one character and condition, and acting as one being, is but an idle fiction after all ; since in plain sense it is as individuals that men are good or evil, are happy or miserable, and are engaged in an infinite diversity of action, and not as constituent particles of some multitudinous monster.

What is it, then, that a work professing to be the history of a nation actually does ? What it does is precisely this : it devotes itself to a dozen or two of the most distinguished persons of the times of which it professes to relate the story ; and because the stations and actions of those persons much affected the state and affairs of the nation, frequent notice is taken of the people in the way of illustrating the conduct of those principal persons. The natural order would seem to be, that the people, consisting of so many millions of living and rational beings, should form throughout the grand object ; and that the actions of these leading individuals, who by the very nature of the case will occupy, after the historian's best efforts to reduce their fictitious importance, a very disproportionate share of attention, should be narrated as tending to explain, and for the purpose of explaining, the state of the nation, and the changes in its character and affairs. It might be presumed, that the happiness or calamities, the civilization or

barbarism, the tranquillity or commotions, of a large assembled portion of the human race, is a much more considerable object of interest than the mere names, characters, and proceedings, of about as many men as might be conveyed in a common stage-wagon ; and that the writer, who is making records of that nation, should be much more anxious, both to illustrate whatever in its condition and qualities was quite independent of these chief persons, and to elucidate the effect, on the popular condition, of the actions of these persons, than just to relate that these particular persons acted in that particular manner, and then call this a history of the nation. But this latter is obviously the mode in almost all the works professing to be national histories. Throughout the work the nation appears as a large mass of material, which a very few persons in succession have inherited, or bought, or stolen, and on which they have amused themselves with all manner of experiments. Some of them have chosen to cast it into one kind of polity, and others into another ; and sometimes rival proprietors have quarrelled about it, and between them dashed and battered it out of every regular form, wasting and destroying it, as men will often do in quarrelling about what each of them professes to deem very valuable, by tossing large pieces of it at each other's heads. And all the while the relator of the fray views this material in no other light, than that of the question which of the two has the most right to it, and which of them shows the most strength, dexterity, or determination, in employing it in the battle. If it is at one time moulded into a fair and majestic form, it is regarded purely as showing the hand of the artist ; if at the next turn it is again reduced to a mass, and thrown into some loathsome shape, it is no further a matter of concern than to marvel at the strange taste of the sovereign political potter. In plain terms, history takes no further account of the great mass of a nation or of mankind, than as a mere appendage to a few individuals, and serving them in the capacity of a mechanical implement for labour, the passive subject of experiments in legislation, the deluded partisan of faction, and the general's disposable, that is, consumable force for war. The story of this great mass is briefly told, not for its own sake, but merely as a part of the story of the chiefs, and in a manner which indicates, that the interests of the million were quite of secondary account, in the historian's view, to those of the individual. The histories of na-

tions, therefore, are not what they pretend, and are commonly taken to be : history pretends to be the same thing to the *time* of a nation, that geography is to the local *space* that it inhabits ; but a traveller that has just gone along a few of the great roads of a country, and visited its chief towns, might just as properly call a sketch and a map of this journey a geographical survey of the country, as any of our national histories can pretend to be a satisfactory view of the state of a people through a course of ages.

It may indeed be alleged, that the grand defect in question is in a great degree the inevitable misfortune of history, from the very nature of things, which makes it impossible for the historian to do more than record the actions of a few conspicuous men. We acknowledge this to be partly true ; and have only to observe that history therefore, from the narrowness of its scope, is of vastly less value as a revealer of human nature, and a teacher of moral principles, than it has been commonly and pompously represented to be. Exclusive of mere facts, the only truths that history peculiarly illustrates are few and obvious. It were needless to mention the most conspicuous of its demonstrations, the stupendous depravity of our nature ; the whole of the interesting fragment before us, for instance, contains absolutely nothing but an account of follies and crimes, except indeed the heroic conduct of some persons who perished for opposing them. The more specific truths illustrated appear to be these : the invariable tendency of governments to become despotic, the universal disposition of nations to allow them to become so, the extreme hazard to liberty when sought by revolutions effected by arms ; and the infinite mischief of religious intolerance, and of all such measures of the state as naturally tend to create it, and give it an organized force and operation.

A rigid adherence to Mr. Fox's theory (it is not so much his practice) of historical composition, would still more contract its scope and diminish its value. Lord Holland has explained this theory.

"It is indeed probable, that his difficulties on this occasion were greater than any other modern historian would have had to encounter. I have mentioned them more particularly, because they in some measure arose from his scrupulous attention to certain notions he entertained on the nature of a historical composition. If indeed the work were finished, the nature of his design would be best collected from the execution of it ; but as it is unfortunately in an incomplete and unfinished state,

his conception of the duties of a historian may very possibly be misunderstood. The consequence would be, that some passages, which, according to modern taste, must be called peculiarities, might, with superficial critics, pass for defects which he had overlooked, or imperfections which he intended to correct. It is therefore necessary to observe, that he had formed his plan so exclusively on the model of ancient writers, that he not only felt some repugnance to the modern practice of notes, but he thought that all which a historian wished to say, should be introduced as part of a continued narration, and never assume the appearance of a digression, much less of a dissertation annexed to it. From the period therefore that he closed his introductory chapter, he defined his duty as an author to consist in recounting the facts as they arose, or in his simple and forcible language, *in telling the story of those times*. A conversation which passed on the subject of the literature of the age of James the Second proves his rigid adherence to these ideas, and perhaps the substance of it may serve to illustrate and explain them. In speaking of the writers of that period, he lamented that he had not devised a method of interweaving any account of them or their works, much less any criticism on their style, into his history. On my suggesting the example of Hume and Voltaire, who had discussed such topics at some length, either at the end of each reign, or in a separate chapter, he observed, with much commendation of the execution of it, that such a contrivance might be a good mode of writing critical essays, but that it was in his opinion incompatible with the nature of his undertaking, which, if it ceased to be a narration, ceased to be a history. Such restraints assuredly operated as taxes upon his ingenuity, and added to that labour, which the observance of his general laws of composition rendered sufficiently great. On the rules of writing he had reflected much and deeply. His own habits naturally led him to compare them with those of public speaking, and the different and even opposite principles upon which excellence is to be attained in these two great arts, were no unusual topics of his conversation."—Preface, pp. 35—38.

The obvious question here is, how history could ever come to have such a specific nature. According to this representation, history might be a thing as defined as a species of animal or vegetable, which must absolutely have always a certain number of precise attributes, and could not have more or less without becoming a monster. But by what sovereign authority was its organization thus definitively fixed, and where are we to look for its pure original type? And even if there were such an original definition and type, and if according to that authority nothing but a continuous narration should be entitled to the denomination of history; of what trifling consequence it would be that this name should be refused to a work that luminously narrated events, that made intervals in this narration, and filled them with eloquent appropriate reflections and profound reasonings, adapted to make the narra-

tion of facts both more striking and more instructive. The writer of such a work might say, I do not care whether you allow my work to be called a history or not; even keep the insignificant term, if you will, sacred to the dry narrator, who has not understanding enough to make important reflections as he goes on; if it is on account of the eloquence and reasoning in my work that the name of history is denied it, I have only to say, that I have then written something better than history.

History, as an art, is no more bound up by technical and exclusive laws than oratory or poetry. It is just any mode of narration in which any man chooses to relate to other men a series of facts. It may be written as a mere chronicle, or in a continuous and artfully-arranged relation without reflections, or in a narration moderately interspersed with short observations, which cause but a momentary interruption of the story, or in a form admitting such frequent and large dissertations, as to become, in some sense, a course of historical lectures. These various methods of bringing back the past to view, are adapted to the various kinds of inquisitiveness with which men seek a knowledge of the past. A few may be content with a bare knowledge that certain things happened at certain times: many wish to have the events adjusted into an order which shall exhibit their connexion from the beginning to the end; some wish to comprehend the causes and tendencies of events, as well as to be apprised of any remarkable contemporary circumstances, or distinguished men, that without being directly involved in the train of events, had any relation with any stage of them; and a few are even desirous of formal deductions of moral and political doctrines. Excepting perhaps the first of these modes, it would be idle exclusively to appropriate or refuse the denomination of history to any one of them; and especially to refuse the title, if it is deemed a title of dignified import, to such a mode of recording the events of past ages as should tend to explain the causes and various relations, and to enforce whatever important instructions they are capable of being made to yield to the readers; for surely the highest office that history can pretend to execute, is that of raising on ages of the dead a tribute of instruction for the living. We have already said that the wisdom derivable from history is not very copious; but as far as may be, it should seem to

be the business of history, to collect all the little streams of valuable instruction in the distant regions of time (as the rills and rivulets among the remote mountains of Africa are drawn by successive confluence to form the Nile,) and bring them down in one fertilizing current on the lower ages.

To say that the ancient historians confined themselves to a straight forward unbroken course of narration, is just the same thing, with respect to its authority in directing our practice, as to say they built their houses, or shaped their clothes, in this or that particular way; we have always an appeal to the nature and reason of the thing. And we have also an appeal to universal colloquial practice, which may be assumed to be substantially the model for all communications that are to be made from one human being to another by written words. If a man were relating to us any interesting train of actions or events, of which he had been a witness, or had received his information from witnesses, we should expect him often to interrupt his narration with explanatory remarks at least; and if he were a very intelligent man, we should be delighted to hear him make observations, tending to establish important general truths from the facts related. We should positively compel him to do something of this; for we should just as much think of giving the lie to all he said, as of suffering him to go on an hour without raising some questions, both of fact and of general speculation. And we do not comprehend how written history can be under any law, unless some dictum of pedantry, to forbid it to imitate, in a moderate degree, what is so natural and so rational in a narration made personally by a judicious man to intelligent companions.

Beside the information of the distinguished statesman's opinions on historical composition, the preface contains various interesting particulars of his habits and studies. It appears that his feelings were so far from being totally absorbed by ambition, that his mental resources were so great, and his susceptibility of interest so lively and versatile, that in the intervals of his most vehement public exertions, and during the season in which he seceded in a great measure from the political warfare, he enjoyed exquisitely the pleasures of elegant literature and rural nature. It is no less pleasing than it is unusual and wonderful, to see the simple and cordial feelings of the human being, and the taste of the man of letters,

thus preserving their existence amidst the artificial interests and the tumults of a statesman's life, and unfolding themselves with energy in every season of retreat from the political sphere. With a true philanthropist, however, it will be a question of conscience, how far he may innocently surrender himself even to the refined gratifications of imagination and taste, while sensible that very important interests may be depending on his more or less continued prosecution of the rougher exercises of political argument. There is no preserving patience, to hear a man like Mr. Fox, and in such a period as that he lived in, talk of employing himself in preparing an edition of Dryden's works; an occupation in which he might consume, in settling the propriety of some couple of poetical epithets, just as much time as would have sufficed for preparing the outlines of a speech on the subject of parliamentary reform. It would be a fine thing indeed, to see the great statesman solemnly weighing the merits of the meaning of some awkward line, which the poet perhaps wrote half asleep, when driven to finish the "tale" of verses which some Pharaoh of a bookseller had two or three times sent his imps to demand, for money paid, and perhaps spent in the wine that had imparted the cast of somnolency to the verse in question. Nor is it solely on the ground of his possible public usefulness, that we feel some want of complacency in hearing him exclaim, "Oh how I wish that I could make up my mind to think it right, to devote all the remaining part of my life to such subjects, and such only!" It will suggest itself that toward the close of his life, there might be, setting out of the question too any labours due to the public, some other things proper to be thought of, besides the vindication of Racine's poetical merits, and the chastisement of Dryden and others who had not done them justice. Notwithstanding, if all duties and services of stronger claim could have been first discharged, it would have been very gratifying to have received from him that projected treatise on Poetry, History, and Oratory, on the subject of which Lord Holland speaks.

Many persons will be surprised to be informed that Mr. Fox was slow in composition; and this inconvenience was increased by his extreme solicitude to keep his page clear of any trace of his *trade*, as he should seem to have regarded it, of public speaking. From this solicitude he refused admittance, by Lord Holland's account, to many expressions and

sentiments which in a speech would have been eloquent. This will be deemed an unfortunate and injurious fastidiousness in our great orator; for the consequence is, that we by no means find in the writing the whole mental power we know there was in the man. There is a certain bareness, and almost coldness, of style, from which a reader, not otherwise acquainted with the force of his talents, would never learn the irresistible power of his eloquence: in passing along the pages of the work before us, we earnestly, and too often vainly, long for some of those mighty emanations of sentiment which used to set us on fire in hearing him. It were strange indeed, if he considered these living fires as something of too professional and vulgar a kind, to be allowed to impart their animation to history. It were strange if history, because its subjects are chiefly dead men, should be required to preserve a kind of analogy with their skeletons, and be cold, and dry, and still, like them. It is certainly the office of history to show us "a valley of dry bones;" but it interests us most by the energy which transforms the whole scene into life.

Many pages of Lord Holland's preface are occupied with a very curious account of the fate of King James's manuscripts, deposited in the Scotch College at Paris. Mr. Fox's inquiries fully ascertained that they were destroyed during the late revolution.

The period of our history, selected by Mr. Fox, was evidently adapted for what was of course his purpose, to illustrate the nature and basis, and the whole progress of the attainment of that political freedom which this country since the Revolution of 1688 has enjoyed, notwithstanding many just causes of complaint, in a higher degree than perhaps any other nation of ancient or modern times. The events of that period were of a kind which, contemplated merely as a dramatic scene, containing a certain portion of incident, show, and action, (the only view, unfortunately, in which most of us regard history,) had in former years rather a strong effect on the imagination, even when we did not take the trouble to think deeply of the political tendency and result. But in this respect the case will be found to be now greatly changed. What has taken place in our own times, has thrown all the transactions of several centuries past, considered as matter of magnificent exhibition, quite into the shade. It is but very

occasionally that the mind catches a momentary sight of the transactions of the times of the Charleses, James, and William, through some opening in the stupendous train of revolutions, wars, abdications, dethronements, conquests, and changing constitutions, which has been moving, and is still rapidly moving, before our eyes. Who will think of going back to trace the adventures of one or two monarchs-errant of former times, when there are whole parties of them up and down Europe, with a sufficient probability of additions to the number? Who will go almost two centuries back to survey a nation risen in arms against a tyrant, though totally ignorant of the true principles of liberty, when they can see such a phenomenon, just springing up in the neighbourhood a few weeks since? The contests of parties in those times, the questions of prerogative, the loyalty of faction leaders, the devising of plans of government, the ravage of armies, the progress of a commander into a despotic monarch, the subsidence of national enthusiasm into the apathy of slaves, are apt to affect us as an old and dull story, at a time when no one cares to buy a map of Europe, or count its kingdoms, or go over the list of its monarchs, or read one page about the nature of its constitutions of government, or ask one sentence about the rival parties in its states, from knowing that a few months may put all such information out of date. On such accounts, as well as from the present indisposition to any study of politics as a science, we have little expectation that the interesting production before us will do more than merely gratify the literary curiosity excited by the name of the great author. The noble spirit of liberty which pervades every part of it, will be flatly offensive to many of his countrymen; and will appear to others as a kind of high-spirited and patriotic romance, proving that the sanguine temperament of the orator of the people wonderfully retained his juvenility of opinion in his more advanced age, in spite of the years and the events that have made *them* wiser.

So much of the volume as Mr. Fox wrote, consists of three chapters, of which the first is called introductory, and contains a brief retrospect of the reign of Charles II., and some of the circumstances of what was named the Commonwealth. The two latter go over about seven months of the reign of James II., and form the commencement of the intended history, which, if the author had lived and enjoyed leisure, would

probably have been brought down to a period lower than the Revolution ; it does not appear that his thoughts had decidedly fixed on any precise point of time as the limit.

It was not to be expected that any singular novelty either of fact or doctrine should be brought out, in the review of a period so often subject to research and controversial discussion ; but we feel, as we did expect to feel, that we go over the ground with a better light than we have done before. There is a simplicity in the opening out of the involved crowd of characters and affairs, which brings both the individual objects, and their relations to one another, more palpably into our sight. We feel how delightful it is to go through an important and confused scene in the company of such an illuminating mind, and how easily we could surrender ourselves to an almost implicit reliance on its judgment. Connected with this extremely discriminating analysis, and distinct statement of facts, the reader will find every where a more unaffected unlaboured independence of opinion, than in perhaps any other of our historians ; the author seems to judge freely, as by a kind of inherent necessity ; and he condemns, (for indeed this is the duty of his office in almost every page,) with an entire indifference to those circumstances to which even historians are often obsequious. He passes sentence on nobles and kings with as little fear, and at the same time in as calm a tone, as the court that summoned, immediately after their death, the monarchs of Egypt. With respect to this calmness, it gives a dignified air to history ; yet we will acknowledge that in several instances, in this work, after the indictment and proof of enormous wickedness, we have wished the sentence pronounced with somewhat more emphasis. The mildness of the man, occasionally, a little qualifies, in expression, the energy of justice ; but it only qualifies, it does not pervert it ; he most impartially condemns where he ought, and we have only wished, in a few cases, a severer acerbity of language. The criminal charges however are made with a fulness and aggravation which might sometimes perhaps be deemed to excuse the historian from formally pronouncing any judgment, as no expression could be found by which the character of the criminal could be more blasted, than it is already by the statement of the crimes.

If the work had been carried through the whole of the selected period, it would have been an admirable contrast and

antidote to the parallel part of Hume's history, in point of honesty of representation. Our author justly accuses Hume of a constant partiality to the cause of the tyrants in his statement and reasonings, and of a base disingenuousness in his observations on the conduct of Charles II., respecting the death of Algernon Sydney; he convicts him of a direct and shameful fabrication of a parliamentary debate in 1685, which debate did not take place, nor any thing like it; and he ascribes to him an almost puerile respect for kings, as such. After all this, we own it requires our whole stock of patience to read those extremely respectful and flattering expressions which he seeks every occasion, and once or twice goes much out of his way, to bestow on this historian; expressions which are applied not only to his talents, to which they would be always due, but to his character, to which these articles of accusation, exhibited by his admirer, may prove what sort of moral principles are fairly attributable. The passage relating to the condemnation of Sydney, is a good specimen of our author's decided manner of expressing his opinion, and also of his strange prejudice in favour of Hume's moral qualities.

Was it ever understood, till now, that a man eminent at once for the depth and soundness of his understanding, and the integrity and benevolence of his heart, *can* be an apologist (the full evidence of the nature of the facts being before him) for the foulest murders of a tyrant? Would not that integrity and benevolence of heart have been high in favour at the court of such a tyrant, which should have put in exercise so strong an understanding to preserve his majesty in a state of entire self-complacency while perpetrating the murder of one of the noblest of his subjects and of mankind? As to posthumous infamy, and the retribution to be inflicted by history, we wonder whether such a thing ever once occurred to the thoughts of a tyrant, who, in pursuing to death a man of such heroic virtue as to have offended or alarmed him, could spurn every human sympathy, defy the indignation of all good men, and find a tribe of courtiers, comprising nobles, prelates, and scholars, ever ready to applaud his justice. And if by "conscience" is here meant, that sentiment which connects with our actions a reference to a God and a future judgment, it is surely a very hopeful thing, that a man, who can deliberately brave the divine vengeance, should be in-

timidated from committing a crime, by thinking of the fearful doom which awaits him in the paragraphs of some historian!

In speaking of the fate of Charles I., Mr. Fox, in an argument of great candour and delicacy, disapproves of his execution, on the ground both of justice and policy, but especially the latter. He passes in too much haste over the character of Cromwell, and gives a rather equivocal estimate of it, except indeed as contrasted with that of Washington, whom he takes the occasion, afforded by the partial similarity of the situations of the two men, to celebrate in terms of the highest possible eulogium.

We should hope the notion that good political institutions will be certain of an efficacious operation, by the mere strength of the dead wisdom, if we may so call it, that resides in their construction, independently of the character of the men who are in the administration of them, has lost its influence on the public mind; if not, the following striking lesson ought to contribute to expel such a vain fancy.

“The reign of Charles the Second forms one of the most singular, as well as of the most important periods of history. It is the era of good laws and bad government. The abolition of the Court of Wards, the repeal of the writ *de Heretico Comburendo*, the Triennial Parliament Bill, the establishment of the rights of the House of Commons in regard to impeachment, the expiration of the License Act, and above all, the glorious statute of Habeas Corpus, have therefore induced a modern writer of great eminence to fix the year 1679 as the period at which our constitution had arrived at its greatest theoretical perfection. but he owns, in a short note upon the passage alluded to, that the times immediately following were times of great practical oppression. What a field for meditation does this short observation, from such a man, furnish! What reflections does it not suggest to a thinking mind, upon the inefficacy of human laws, and the imperfection of human constitutions! We are called from the contemplation of the progress of our constitution, and our attention is fixed with the most minute accuracy to a particular point, when it is said to have risen to its utmost perfection. Here we are then at the best moment of the best constitution that human wisdom ever framed. What follows? A time of oppression and misery, not arising from external causes, such as war, pestilence, or famine, nor even from any such alterations of the laws as might be supposed to impair this boasted perfection, but from a corrupt and wicked administration, which all the so much admired checks of our constitution were not able to prevent. How vain, then, how idle, how presumptuous is the opinion that laws can do every thing! and how weak and pernicious the maxim founded upon it, that measures, not men, are to be attended to!”—P. 20.

The historian appears to have examined a great deal of evidence on the subject of the pretended popish plot, as the

result of which he gives it as his opinion, that the greater part of those who were concerned in the iniquitous prosecution of the papists, were rather under the influence of "an extraordinary degree of blind credulity," than guilty of "the deliberate wickedness of planning and assisting in the perpetration of legal murder."

It is most melancholy to contemplate a great nation, which not very long before had been animated, in however rude a manner, and however ill-instructed in political science, with a high spirit of liberty, which had raised its strong arm against the impositions of a monarch who thought it necessary for a governor to be a despot, and had prostrated him and his armies in the dust, submitting at last to the unqualified despotism of a much more odious tyrant. The view is still more mortifying, when we consider that this tyrant had never performed any one great action, and possessed no one virtue under heaven, to palliate even in appearance his depravity, and lessen, to the people, the ignominy of being his slaves. But it is most mortifying of all to find that these slaves were beaten and trodden into such fatuity, that they voluntarily abdicated all the rites of both men and brutes, and humbly lauded the master who sported with their privileges, their property, and their blood. No inconsiderable part of this volume consists of descriptions of such national humiliation; and we transcribe a short specimen, immediately following the account of Charles's turning off his last parliament, with the full resolution never to call another; "to which resolution, indeed, Louis had bound him, as one of the conditions on which he was to receive his stipend."

"No measure was ever attended with more complete success. The most flattering addresses poured in from all parts of the kingdom; divine right and indiscriminate obedience were every where the favourite doctrines; and men seemed to vie with each other who should have the honour of the greatest share in the glorious work of slavery, by securing to the king, for the present, and, after him, to the duke, absolute and uncontrollable power. They, who, either because Charles had been called a forgiving prince by his flatterers, (upon what ground I could never discover) or from some supposed connexion between indolence and good nature, had deceived themselves into a hope that his tyranny would be of the milder sort, found themselves much disappointed in their expectations. The whole history of the remaining part of his reign, exhibits an uninterrupted series of attacks upon the liberty, property, and lives of his subjects."—P. 43.

The most outrageous operations of Charles's tyranny were carried on in Scotland. This work exhibits, in considerable detail, the horrible system of proscription and murder, which has given him a very reasonable claim to the company, in history or any where else, of Tiberius ; for so we must be allowed to think, notwithstanding Mr. Fox has taken exception to Burnet's classing these two names together, forgetting that he himself had done the very same thing in an earlier page.

The scene becomes more hateful at every step ; till at length we behold one general spectacle of massacre, in which the most infernal riots of cruelty to which military ruffians, fully let loose, could be stimulated, were authorized and applauded by a government, which colleges, and dignitaries, and a large and preponderating part of the nation, adored as of divine authority, and really deserved, as a reward of such a faith, the privilege of adoring. It is after viewing such a course of transactions, that we want expressions of somewhat more emphatical reprobation, in closing the account with this wicked monarch, than those, though very strong and comprehensive, which Mr. Fox has used in the concluding delineation of his character. It was very proper to notice his politeness and affability, his facility of temper, and kindness to his mistresses ; but we think they should not have been so mentioned, as to have even the slightest appearance of a *set off* against the malignity of his wickedness and the atrocities of his government.

The manner in which Charles's kindness to his mistresses is mentioned, is a remarkable illustration of the importance of personal morality to a historian, as well as to a statesman.

"His recommendation of the Duchess of Portsmouth and Mrs. Gwyn, upon his death-bed to his successor, is much to his honour ; and they who censure it, seem, in their zeal to show themselves strict moralists, to have suffered their notions of vice and virtue to have fallen into strange confusion. Charles's connexion with those ladies might be vicious but at a moment when that connexion was upon the point of being finally and irrevocably dissolved, to concern himself about their future welfare, and to recommend them to his brother with earnest tenderness, was virtue. It is not for the interest of morality that the good and evil actions of bad men should be confounded."—P. 64.

We do not know that any moralist ever bade a departing

criminal to be concerned for the welfare of his surviving companions in guilt, only it would be enjoined that shame and penitence should mingle with this concern; but every moralist will be indignant at this gentle equivocal mode of touching that vice, by which it is notorious that the example of the king contributed to deprave the morals of the nation, as much as his political measures to exterminate its freedom. It is most signally remarkable what a careful silence is maintained, in this work, respecting the state of morals during this reign. Is it then no business of history to take account of such a thing? Even regarding the matter in a political view, is the depravity of a people never to be reckoned among the causes, and the most powerful causes, of their sinking quietly under despotism?

The commencement of James's reign, as far as the work before us has illustrated it, was a mere continuation of the preceding, as James, at his accession, graciously promised his subjects it should. This promise was received with grateful joy by a large proportion of the English nation, and by the governing party even in Scotland, whose fulsome abominable address of congratulation is given in this work. Their joy and loyalty were carried to the height of enthusiasm, no doubt, when they found the same infernal work of massacre animated to redoubled activity, and were honoured with the charge of executing an act, which extended to all persons *hearing* conventicle preaching, the punishment of death.

Though James was a papist, Mr. Fox has proved, by the most decisive arguments, that his grand leading object was the establishment of an absolute despotism; and that any designs he might entertain of introducing popery, would have been kept in reserve till this was accomplished. Meanwhile he much courted the zealous adherents of the established church, and he plainly intimated that they had been found the firmest friends of such government, as that of his father, his brother, and himself. It is strange that a man of Mr. Fox's candour should, throughout the book, have contrived to find the very same thing. It surely became him, in the justice of history, to have particularized the many noble efforts made by the churchmen of those times, in resistance of the doctrines and the practices of despotism. He ought to have taken notice of what was so zealously done and written, by ecclesiastical dignitaries, in behalf of liberty of conscience, and in

prevention of all persecution for religious opinions and methods of worship.

A large space is occupied with the invasions and proceedings of Monmouth and Argyle. The account of the execution of Monmouth is finely written; but the most interesting part of the whole volume, is the account of the last days and the death of Argyle. It is a picture drawn with the happiest simplicity, though with one slight blemish, of one of the most enchanting examples of heroic virtue that history or poetry ever displayed. It is closed with what we felt to be the most eloquent sentence in the whole work.

After his capture, as Mr. Fox relates, "Argyle was immediately carried to Renfrew, thence to Glasgow, and on the twentieth of June was led in triumph to Edinburgh. The order of the council was particular; that he should be led bareheaded, in the midst of Graham's guards, with their matches cocked, his hands tied behind his back, and preceded by the common hangman; in which situation, that he might be the more exposed to the insults and taunts of the vulgar, it was directed that he should be carried to the Castle by a circuitous route. To the equanimity with which he bore these indignities, as indeed to the manly spirit exhibited by him throughout in these last scenes of his life, ample testimony is borne by all the historians. Speaking of the supineness of his countrymen, and of the little assistance that he had received from them, he declares with his accustomed piety, his resignation to the will of God, which was that 'Scotland should not be delivered at this time nor especially by his hand.' He then exclaims with the regret of a patriot, but with no bitterness of disappointment—'But alas! who is then to be delivered? There may,' says he, 'be hidden ones, but there appears no great party in the country who desire to be relieved.'

"When he is told that he is to be put to the torture, he neither breaks out into any high-sounding bravado, any premature vaunts of the resolution with which he will endure it, nor on the other hand, into passionate exclamations on the cruelty of his enemies, or unmannerly lamentations of his fate. After stating that orders were arrived, that he must be tortured, unless he answers all questions upon oath, he simply adds, that he hopes God will support him; and then leaves off writing, not from any want of spirits to proceed, but to enjoy the con-

solation which was left him, in the society of his wife, the Countess being just then admitted.

“Religious concerns, in which he seems to have been very serious and sincere, engaged much of his thoughts; while he anticipates, with a hope approaching to certainty, of a happy futurity, he does not forget those who had been justly dear to him in this world. He writes on the day of his execution to his wife, and to some other relatives, for whom he seems to have entertained a sort of parental tenderness, short but the most affectionate letters, wherein he gives them the greatest satisfaction in his power, by assuring them of his composure and tranquillity of mind, and refers them for further consolations to those sources from which he derived his own. He states that those in whose hands he is, had at first used him hardly, but that God had melted their hearts, and that he was now treated with civility. Never perhaps did a few sentences present so striking a picture of a mind truly virtuous and honourable. Heroic courage is the least part of his praise, and vanishes as it were from our sight, when we contemplate the sensibility with which he acknowledges the kindness, such as it was, of the very men who are leading him to the scaffold; the generous satisfaction which he feels on reflecting that no confession of his had endangered his associates; and above all, his anxiety, in such moments, to perform all the duties of friendship and gratitude, not only with the most scrupulous exactness, but with the most considerate attention to the feelings as well as to the interests of the person who was the object of them. Indeed, it seems throughout, to have been the peculiar felicity of this man's mind, that every thing was present to it that ought to be so; nothing that ought not. Of his country, he could not be unmindful; and it was one among other consequences of his happy temper, that on this subject he did not entertain those gloomy ideas which the then state of Scotland was but too well fitted to inspire. In a conversation with an intimate friend, he says, that though he does not take upon him to be a prophet, he doubts not but that deliverance will come, and suddenly, of which his failings had rendered him unworthy to be the instrument. In some verses which he composed on the night preceding his execution, and which he intended for his epitaph, he thus expresses this hope more distinctly :

“ ‘On my attempt though Providence did frown,
His oppress d people God at length will own ;
Another hand, by more successful speed.
Shall raise the remnant, bruise the serpent's head.’

“ For constancy and equanimity under the severest trials, few men have equalled, none ever surpassed the Earl of Argyll. The most powerful of all tempters, hope, was not held out to him ; so that he had not, in addition to his other hard tasks, that of resisting her seductive influence ; but the passions of a different class had the fullest scope for their attacks. These however would make no impression on his well-disciplined mind. Anger could not exasperate, fear could not appal him ; and if disappointment and indignation at the misbehaviour of his followers and the supineness of the country, occasionally did cause uneasy sensations, they had not the power to extort from him one unbecoming, or even querulous expression. Let him be weighed ever so scrupulously, and in the nicest scales, he will not be found, in a single instance, wanting in the charity of a Christian, the firmness and benevolence of a patriot, the integrity and fidelity of a man of honour.

“ In order that the triumph of injustice might be complete, it was determined that without any new trial the Earl should suffer upon the iniquitous sentence of 1682. Accordingly on the thirtieth day of June, 1685, he was brought from the Castle to the Laigh Council House, and thence to the place of execution. Before he left the Castle he had his dinner at the usual hour, at which he discoursed not only calmly but even cheerfully. After dinner he retired to his bed-chamber, where he slept quietly for about a quarter of an hour. While he was asleep, one of the members of the Council came and intimated a desire to speak with him. Upon being told that he was asleep, the manager disbelieved the account. To satisfy him the door was half opened, and he then beheld in a sweet and tranquil slumber the man who, by the doom of him and his fellows, was to die within the space of two hours. Struck with the sight, he hurried from the room, quitted the Castle with the utmost precipitation, and hid himself in the lodgings of an acquaintance, flung himself upon the first bed that presented itself, and had every appearance of a man suffering the most excruciating torture. His friend offered him some wine. He refused, saying—‘ No, that will not help me ; I have been

with Argyle, and saw him sleeping as pleasantly as ever man did, within an hour of eternity. But as for me'—— What a satisfactory spectacle to a philosophical mind, to see the oppressor in the zenith of his power envying his victim ! What an acknowledgment of the superiority of virtue ! What an affecting and forcible testimony to the value of that peace of mind which innocence alone can confer ! When we reflect that the guilt which agonized that man was probably incurred for the sake of some vain title, or at least of some increase of wealth, which he did not want and possibly knew not how to enjoy, our disgust is turned into compassion for that very foolish class of men, whom the world calls wise in their generation.

“Soon after his short repose, Argyle was brought to the Council-House, from which place is dated the letter to his wife, and thence to execution. On the scaffold he had some discourse with the two ministers, Mr. Annan and Mr. Char-teus. He desired both of them to pray for him, and prayed himself with much fervency and devotion. The same mixture of firmness and mildness is conspicuous in every part of the speech which he then made to the people. He said—‘We ought not to despise our afflictions, nor to faint under them. We must not suffer ourselves to be exasperated against the instruments of our troubles, nor by fraudulent, nor pusillanimous compliances, bring guilt upon ourselves. Faint hearts ordinarily, are false hearts, choosing sin rather than suffering.’ Having then asked pardon for his own failings both of God and man, he would have concluded ; but being reminded that he had said nothing of the Royal family—he adds, that he prayed, that there might never be wanting one of the Royal family to support the Protestant religion ; and if any of them had swerved from the true faith, he prayed God to turn their hearts, but at any rate to save his people from their machinations. He then turned to the south side of the scaffold, and said—‘I pray you do not misconstrue my behaviour this day ! I freely forgive all men their wrongs and injuries done against me, as I hope to be forgiven of God.’ Mr. Annan repeated those words louder to the people. The Earl then went to the north side of the scaffold, and used the same or like expressions. Mr. Annan repeated them again, and said—‘*This nobleman dies a Protestant.*’—The Earl stepped forward again, and said—‘*I die not only a Protestant, but with a heart-*

hatred of Popery, Prelacy, and all superstition whatsoever.' He then embraced his friends, gave some tokens of his remembrance to his son-in-law, Lord Maitland, for his daughter and grand-children, stripped himself of part of his apparel, of which he likewise made presents, and laid his head upon the block. Having uttered a short prayer, he gave the signal to the executioner, which was instantly obeyed, and his head was severed from his body.—Such were the last hours, and such the final close of that great man's life. MAY THE LIKE HAPPY SERENITY IN SUCH DREADFUL CIRCUMSTANCES, AND A DEATH EQUALLY GLORIOUS, BE THE LOT OF ALL WHOM TYRANNY, OF WHATEVER DENOMINATION OR DESCRIPTION, IN ANY AGE, OR IN ANY COUNTRY, SHALL CALL TO EXPIATE THEIR VIRTUES ON THE SCAFFOLD !"—History, Chapter III., year 1685.

V.

EDGEWORTH'S PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION.

Essays on Professional Education. By R. L. EDGEWORTH,
Esq., F. R. S., M. R. I. A.

IN literary partnership with a female relative, this author has become sufficiently well known to the public, to enable it to prejudge with tolerable confidence the general qualities of any work he might write, especially on the subject of education. His book will be opened with the expectation of a very good share of valuable instruction, the result of a long and careful exercise of sound sense on the habits of society, on the experience of education, and on a great multitude of books. There will be no hope of convicting the author of enthusiasm for a system, or servility to any distinguished authority. It will be expected that good use will be made of the opinions of the most opposite speculatists, and that most of the opinions that are approved will be supported by some reference to experiments by which they have been verified. It will be expected that, while a philosophic manner and diction are avoided, and all speculations are constantly applied to a practical purpose, full advantage will yet be taken of those explanations which the laws of our nature have received from the best modern philosophers. The reader will reckon on finding it constantly maintained, that the influence of facts has fully as efficient an operation as instruction by words, in forming the human character; and he will not be surprised at a tone of somewhat more positive confidence than himself is happy enough to entertain, of the complete and necessary success of the process, when it unites the proper facts and the proper instructions. As a moralist, it will perhaps raise no wonder if the author should be found so much a man of the world, as to admit various convenient compromises between the pure principles of virtue, and the customs and prejudices of society;

and as to religion, no man will expect bigotry, or ascetic and incommodious piety, or any sort of doctrinal theology. There will be an agreeable and confident expectation of a great variety of pertinent anecdotes, supplied from history and observation, at once to relieve and illustrate the reasonings. The reader will be prepared to accept this mode of infusing both vivacity and instructive force into the composition, instead of brilliance of imagination ; comprehensive knowledge instead of argumentative subtlety ; and perspicuity of language instead of elegance.

The first essay, or chapter, proposes principles and plans for those stages of education, which, preceding the direct training for a particular profession, admit of a discipline in many points common to the children destined to all the professions. And yet, as parents are urged to fix at a very early period the future profession of each of their sons, they are properly recommended to introduce at an early stage of this general discipline a specific modification of it, prospective to the profession selected. In advising parents to this early choice, the author explodes, in a great measure, the popular notion of a natural inherent determination toward some one pursuit more than another, commonly called "peculiar genius," "impulse of genius," "bent of mind," "natural turn," &c. In attacking this notion, he calls in the powerful aid of Johnson, who always manifested an extreme antipathy to it. "I hate," said he, "to hear people ask children whether they will be bishops, or chancellors, or generals, or what profession their genius leads them to : do not they know, that a boy of seven years old has a genius for nothing but spinning a top and eating apple-pie ?" Mr. Edgeworth condemns the folly of waiting in expectation that the supposed natural genius will disclose itself, or be drawn forth by some accident ; during all which time the general discipline of education will probably be very remiss, the specific training preparatory to professional studies will be systematically avoided, and the youth is either growing up to be fit for nothing, or is perhaps determined at last by a casual event, or unfortunate acquaintance, to the very worst selection that he could have made in the whole catalogue of employments. It is insisted, that methods which will generally prove effectual may be adopted by parents, to give the child a preference for any department of learning or action they choose, and to make him

sedulous to acquire the requisite qualifications. The author notices some of the most remarkable instances recorded of persons being determined by a particular accident to the pursuits in which they afterwards excelled ; as Cowley's passion for poetry originated from his meeting with the Fairy Queen in his mother's window ; and Sir Joshua Reynolds's for painting, from his chancing to open a book by Richardson, on that subject, at a friend's house. Mr. Edgeworth observes, that the effect produced by reading these books would not have been less if they had been laid in the way by design ; and that, besides, when an impression is to be made by design, the effect is not left to depend on a single impression, since by a judicious management the child may be subjected to a combination and a series of impressions, all tending to the same point. The manner of conducting this process is sketched with a great deal of knowledge and judgment in these essays. If the magnitude and certainty of the effect to be thus produced are assumed in terms rather too little qualified, it is an error on the right side ; since it will invigorate the motive by which parents and friends are to be prompted to design and perseverance, and since nothing can be practically more mischievous, than the fancy that all is to be done by some innate predisposition and adaptation, aided by fortuitous occurrences. At the same time, our author does not need to be reminded, that, as a thousand boys of the same ages as Cowley and Reynolds might have met with, and partly read, the Fairy Queen, and the book on painting, without receiving from them any strong determination to poetry or painting ; so, from the same cause,—the same intrinsic mental difference, whatever be the ultimate principle of that difference,—the proposed discipline of multiplied and successive impressions, passing just an equal length of time on a thousand youthful minds, will eventually leave, notwithstanding, all imaginable varieties in their dispositions and qualifications. Nevertheless, there will be many more heroes, or orators, or engineers, than if no such process had been employed ; and those who fail to become heroic, or eloquent, or scientific, will yet be less absolutely the reverse of those characters, than they would otherwise have been. Our author touches but briefly on the nature of that undeniable original distinction which constitutes what is denominated *genius* ; and maintains, very reasonably, that whatever might

have been the nature, the cause, or the amount, of the inherent original difference between such men as Newton, Milton, and Locke, and ordinary men, that original difference was probably far less than the actual difference after the full effect of impressions, cultivation, and exertion. He suggests some very useful cautions to parents, against treating their children according to the mysterious and invidious distinction of "genius" and "no genius."

The defects and the cultivation of memory are shortly noticed; and it is maintained, that any memory may be so disciplined, as to be quite competent to the most important matters of business and science. In proof of this, and as a lesson on the best mode of cultivation, the example of Le Sage, the philosopher of Geneva, is introduced, and would have been very instructive if his method of retaining his knowledge by connecting it with a set of general principles, (a sort of corks to keep it in buoyancy) had been more precisely explained by means of two or three exemplifications. There are some very useful observations on the several relations of ideas which are the instruments of recollection; as resemblance, contrariety, contiguity, and cause and effect; it is strongly and justly insisted, that the memory which operates most by means of the last of these relations is by far the most useful, and therefore that the best mode of cultivating it is a severe attention to this relation.

Mr. Edgeworth censures, but not in illiberal language, the system which prevails in our public schools, and our colleges, in which so disproportionate a measure of time is devoted to classical studies, and in the former of which the course of instruction is the same for all the youth, though they are intended for all the different professions. He advises not to force any violent reforms on these ancient institutions, but to induce their gradual and voluntary melioration, or, if that be possible, to superannuate them, by means of new though smaller seminaries, in which a much greater share of attention shall be given to science, to studies of direct moral and political utility, and to the peculiar preparation for professions. He adverts to the system of education adopted by the Jesuits; and the plans devised by Frederic "the Great," as he is here designated; and reviews at some length the succession of magnificent schemes projected by the French philosophers before and in the course of the revolution. Some of these schemes were practically attempted, and they failed, partly

from being on too vast a scale, and beginning with too high a species of instruction, and partly from that state of national tumult which withdrew both the attention and the pecuniary support indispensable to these great undertakings. At length, a party of philosophers obtained the complete establishment of a more limited, but as far as it extends, more effective institution, under the denomination of *Ecole Polytechnique*. In the general course of education in France, however, our author observes, classical literature has of late years been regarded with such indifference or contempt, as to have threatened a depravation of taste and of language; the studies of youth having been directed with incomparably the most emulation and ardour, to the branches of knowledge related or capable of being applied to the art of war. He relates how the men of science rose to the highest importance at the very period at which it might have been previously imagined they must have sunk into utter obscurity, the hour of revolutionary violence and terror.

Our author's scheme for the formation of an improved order of elementary and superior schools in this country, is laid down with much good sense, and without visionary extravagance, particularly without the extravagance of expecting any assistance from the legislature. He would create and support them simply by the conviction, in the minds of parents in each town and village, of the usefulness and even necessity of such a mode of instruction as he advises; a mode which should include, without any ostentation, an attention to more branches of knowledge than are usually acquired in schools. Or, if it were desirable there should be any expedient more formal, for promoting such schools, than merely the wish of parents to obtain such instruction, he recommends there should be an association of gentlemen in London to patronize their formation in any part of the country to which they can extend their influence and aid. But the only efficacious power to create competent seminaries, is the concurrent will of a tolerable proportion of the parents, in any place, to have their children instructed in the rational manner proposed.

The second essay is on Clerical Education. Considering the expensiveness of a residence at college, and the very inadequate salaries of curates, the author dissuades parents who have not such connexions as may assist their son's success in the church, from choosing this profession for him; unless they

have fortune sufficient to contribute to his support for perhaps many years after his entrance on it, or he has already acquired a very strong determination of mind towards it, accompanied by such proofs of application and unusual talent as may warrant a presumption that he will make his way through all difficulties by the force of conspicuous merit. By *making his way*, is meant, of course, his attaining the emoluments and honours of the church; and it is obvious enough, that a young man who has no means of doing this but his personal qualities and conduct, has little ground for such a presumption, when it is considered how much the disposal of the ecclesiastical good things is regulated by parliamentary interest, and the favour of persons of rank. The parliamentary interest confessedly so powerful in making dignitaries and rich incumbents, our author decides to be partly beneficial and partly injurious to the church and to national morality.

“That which is exerted by rich commoners or noble families, to obtain livings for men of learning and virtue, who have been tutors to their children, is highly advantageous; it insures good education to our young nobility, and it encourages men of learning and talents, in the middle or lower orders of life, to instruct themselves, and become fit for such employments, and worthy of such rewards. Parliamentary interest, influencing the distribution of clerical honours and emoluments, is also beneficial, as it tempts parents of good families and fortunes to educate younger sons for the church: they give, as it were, a family pledge for the good conduct of their children, who at the same time may, by their manners and rank, raise the whole profession in the esteem and respect of the public. Church benefices may thus be considered as a fund for the provision of the younger sons of our gentry and nobles; and in this point of view it cannot surely be a matter of complaint to any of the higher and middle classes of the community, that the clergy enjoy a large portion of the riches of the state.”—P. 59

No reader, it is presumed, can permit himself for one moment to doubt, whether all these arrangements can fail to keep in view, as their grand object, the promotion of primitive Christianity among the people, or to prove the best possible means of teaching and exemplifying it; whether the men from the inferior classes, thus seeking and attaining the preferments of the church through the medium of tutorships in noble families, be secure against all possibility of becoming sycophants in the course of their progress, and political tools at its conclusion; or whether zealous piety, and a dereliction of the spirit and fashions of the world, be the *necessary* inheritance of the younger sons of the nobility and gentry. On

these points there can be no doubt; and therefore it is clear that thus far the parliamentary interest in question is highly beneficial to the Christian cause. But the subject has a dark side as well as a bright one; and every reader will be at once grieved and astonished on reading the next paragraph, in which our author says, in so many words, "But parliamentary interest is not always employed in this manner; it is sometimes exerted to obtain livings for the mean hanger-on of one lord, or the drinking or the profligate companion of another." These are *literatim* the words, as they stand in the book before us; but how is it possible they can be true? How is it possible that any bishop will suffer such a man to declare before him that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to enter the sacred function? Or, if it is after his entrance into the church that he becomes such a character, how is it possible an institution framed purely in aid of Christianity should fail to have the most peremptory regulations, not only for interdicting such a man from preferment to larger emoluments and more extensive cure of souls, but for expelling him from the ministry altogether?

If parents have resolved to devote a son to the church, a judicious education will, according to the essayist, infallibly make him a person to do honour to the sacred vocation. In order to determine the right method of education for this specific purpose, our author delineates at length the required character, in the successive official stages of curate, rector, and prelate. He informs us that "a good curate is not the man who boasts of being the boon companion of the jolly squire, who is seen following him and his hounds at full cry, leaping five-barred gates, the admiration of the hallooing heroes of the chase, or, floundering in the mud, their sport and derision: he is not the man set officially, at the foot of his patron's table, "to smack his wine, and rule his roast:" he neither drinks nor swears: he scorns to become the buffoon, and never can become the butt, of the company. Indeed, he does not feel it absolutely necessary to be continually in company." The character which our author proposes to create, is extremely amiable in all the situations and offices in which it is represented. The reader will be prepared not to expect any very strong emphasis to be laid on religion, in the strict sense of the word; he may supply that desideratum, from his own mind, to a sketch of exemplary prudence, dig-

nity, kindness to the poor and sick, diligence, propriety in the performance of the public offices of the church, and moderation on advancement to superior station. There seems a material omission in the description of a good rector. After the melancholy picture given of the misery and degradation suffered by many curates from extreme poverty, we confidently expected to find it made an essential point, in the good character of the rector, never to suffer his curate to be in this situation from the parsimony of the stipend. As the legislature has declined to interfere in this concern, it lies with the holders of livings to give their curates that complacency in their office which accompanies a respectable competence, or to gall them with the mortification, impatience, and disgust, inflicted by a long, toilsome, and hunger-bitten apprenticeship to some better station, towards which they will be continually looking with a loathing and abhorrence of the present condition, and which they will be tempted to practise the grossest servility in order to obtain. What must be the natural effect, on the state of the church, of perhaps several thousands of its ministers having their characters and exertions subjected for many years, if not for life, to the operation of such feelings as these? And what are all the gentlemanly qualities of a rector worth, if he can be content to see a fellow-clergyman and his family half starving on the five per cent. which the said rector affords him from his ecclesiastical income, for taking the work of the parish off his hands?

Having exhibited the model of excellence in the different clerical ranks, in all of which he says it is the very same character that is required, and the highest of which none should attain without having commenced with the lowest, the writer proceeds to the proper training for making the good curate, rector, and bishop. And the plan includes something extremely specific and peculiar, for it proceeds on the principle that "the virtues of a clergyman should be founded on religion;" a foundation, which we cannot, from this work, ascertain to be necessary to the virtue of other professional characters, or necessary to man in general as a moral agent. We are not distinctly informed whether religion, that is, of course, Christianity, is to be considered as any thing more than a convenient basis for a profession, with its appropriate set of peculiar decorums; or whether it is really a system of truth communicated by divine revelation. Nor are we taught to

comprehend how, if Christianity be to be regarded as such a system, education in general, and education for the other particular professions, can be safely and innocently conducted under the exclusion of this divine system of doctrine and moral principles ; and not only an exclusion, but in some of the departments of education, a most pointed and acknowledged opposition. Possibly the light in which the subject is regarded is this—that it is a very trifling question whether Christianity be true or false ; but that it teaches some principles and modes of action, the prevalence of which to a certain extent would be useful in society, and therefore it is desirable they should be inculcated ; while, on the other hand, the condition of society requires the prevalence also, to a certain extent, of directly opposite principles, and therefore the same regard to utility requires that other professions should support, and be supported by, those opposite principles.—With entire gravity our author takes quite the Christian ground, in settling the moral principles of the youth destined to the church. It is while deciding whether his education should be in a great measure private or at a public school.

The private education recommended is not to be a recluse education : the youth is to see the friends and acquaintance of the family, and mix in general conversation. He is to be led gradually, and not with too much haste, into a comprehension of the principal truths,—perhaps we should rather say propositions or notions,—of religion, and into a firm faith in them, founded on the “ broad basis of evidence.” A devotional taste is to be created by “ letting a child have opportunities of observing the sublime and beautiful appearances of nature, the rising and the setting sun, the storm of winter and the opening flowers of spring,” to all which, however, compared with the “ top and apple-pie,” most children will probably manifest the utmost indifference. The impressions are to be reinforced by Mrs. Barbauld’s beautiful hymns, by good descriptions of the striking objects in nature, and by good church music. The most simple and affecting narrative parts of the Bible are to be added as soon as they can be clearly understood ; but the author strongly disapproves of children at an early age being set to read the Bible at large, when a great portion of it must be unintelligible to them, when the irksomeness of having it for a sort of task-book, and the carelessness resulting from constant familiarity with

it, may predispose the pupil to regard it with dislike, and disqualify him for feeling the full impression of its sanctity and grandeur in subsequent life. Instructors are admonished to be cautious of giving the child erroneous and mean ideas of the Divine Being by minute illustrations or trivial and deceptive analogies; of habitually threatening his vengeance on their faults, in the form either of immediate judgments or future retribution; and of describing the future state with the particularity which must divest the idea of all its sublimity. Considering it as impossible, by the nature of the youthful mind, that very young children can be effectually governed by ideas of a remote futurity, our author advises not to make use of these ideas in governing them, "till reiterated experience shall have given them the habit of believing that what was future has become present." With regard to attempting to connect, in the minds of the children, ideas of the divine anger, and the punishments of a future state, with their faults and vices, we think there are pious parents and teachers that need some admonition. To resort, with a promptitude which has at least the effect of profaneness, to these awful ideas, on every recurrence of carelessness or perversity, is the way both to bring those ideas into contempt, and to make all faults appear equal. It is also obvious, that, by trying this expedient on all occasions, parents will bring their authority into contempt. If they would not have that authority set at defiance, they must be able to point to immediate consequences, within their power to inflict on delinquency. Perhaps one of the most prudential rules respecting the enforcement on the minds of children of the conviction that they are accountable to an all-seeing though unseen Governor, and liable to the punishment of obstinate guilt in a future state, is, to take opportunities of impressing this idea the most cogently, at seasons when the children are not lying under any blame or displeasure, at moments of serious kindness on the part of the parents, and serious inquisitiveness on the part of the children, leaving in some degree the conviction to have its own effect, greater or less, in each particular instance of guilt, according to the greater or less degree of aggravation which the child's own conscience can be made secretly to acknowledge in that guilt. And another obvious rule will be, that when he is to be solemnly reminded of these religious sanctions and dangers in immediate connexion with an actual

instance of criminality in his conduct, the instance should be one of the most serious of his faults, that will bear the utmost seriousness of such an admonition. As to how early in life this doctrine may be communicated, there needs no more precise rule than this ; that it may be as early as well-instructed children are found to show any signs of prolonged or returning inquisitiveness concerning the supreme *Cause* of all that they behold, and concerning what becomes of persons known to them in their neighbourhood, whom they find passing, one after another, through the change called death, about which their curiosity will not be at all satisfied by merely learning its name. These inquiries will often begin to interest them, and therefore these doctrines and sanctions of religion may be beneficially introduced into their minds, sooner a great deal than our author seems willing they should hear any thing about God as a Judge, or a future state of retribution. Besides, we do not know what the economy may be at Edgeworth's Town, but in a family where there is any avowed attention to religion, where the children are made acquainted with even only select portions of the Scriptures, where there are any visible acts of devotion, and where it is a practice to attend public worship, it is quite impossible to *prevent* them from acquiring the ideas in question in *some* form ; and therefore, unless parents will adopt systematically, and maintain with the most vigilant care, the practical habits of atheists, in order to keep the children's minds clear of these ideas, there is an absolute necessity of presenting these ideas in a correct though inadequate form as early as possible to the mind, to prevent their being fixed there in a form that shall be absurd and injurious.

The Essay proceeds to indicate the practical discipline for cultivating, or rather creating, the virtues of economy, charity, tolerance, and firmness of mind. Here we meet with one of the many instances of compromise between absolute principle and convenience.

“ In marking the difference between education for different professions, we may observe that a clergyman's should essentially differ from a lawyer's in one respect. A boy intended for the bar may be, in some degree, indulged in that pertinacious temper, which glories in supporting an opinion by all the arguments that can be adduced in its favour ; but a boy designed for the church should never be encouraged to argue for victory ; he should never be applauded for pleading his cause well, for supporting

his own opinion, or for decrying or exposing to ridicule that of his opponent." P. 88.

It seems quite a settled principle of our author's morality, thus to make the character of the *man* not only secondary to the professional character, but a sacrifice to it. Nor can we know where the operation of this principle is to be limited, nor whether it has any limits. If, as in the case before us, the love of truth, and, by infallible consequence, the practical love of justice, may thus be exploded, by a formal sanction to the love of victory, and to a pertinacity regardless of right and wrong, for the sake of producing professional expertness—what other virtue should we hesitate to sacrifice to the same object? Thus explicitly tolerate and encourage in the pupil the contempt of one essential part of moral rectitude, and he may very justly laugh at his parents and tutors, when they are gravely enjoining him not to violate any of the rest. He may tell them, he apprehends it may be of service, in prosecuting some of his designs, to throw aside one or two more of the articles commonly put by moralists among the essentials of virtue; and that therefore, if they please, he had rather be excused listening to any canting lectures about integrity. And if the pure laws of moral excellence are to be deposed from their authority at all, we presume the benefit of the exemption ought not to be confined to the persons intended to figure at the bar. Some other employments, to which the bar professes to be in deadly hostility, have also their pupils and their adepts, to whom the abrogation of the rigid standard of morality will be exceedingly welcome and convenient; and more *professions* than these essays extend to, might have been treated of in the book, much to the edification of many acute and active young persons who are at all times training to them.—Let it be also considered in what a ludicrous predicament the theory of morals would be placed, in a family in which there were several sons, educating for different professions, under the immediate care of their parents; a case which our author regards as very desirable. One son, let it be supposed, is to be a lawyer, another a clergyman. The young clergyman receives, in the sight and hearing of his brother, daily lessons on the indispensable duty of maintaining an ardent love of truth, and an honest candid simplicity, that admits every argument in its proper force, and would feel it a violation of principle—not of reason or decorum only, but of

conscientious principle—to defend error through obstinacy or the desire of victory. But the very spirit and conduct which the young clergyman is taught to regard as immoral, is by the same instructors, on the same day, in the same room, encouraged in the young lawyer by a tolerance, which, if he acquits himself cleverly, will approach to applause. What are these virtuous instructors to do, or say, when the young lawyer laughs aloud at his brother while undergoing their moral lecture, and at them for making it; or when their clerical pupil asks them, with ingenuous distress, what they really mean by the terms duty, morality, virtuous principle, and the like, seeing the pretended moral principle and its direct reverse are thus to be regarded as equally right? We can conceive no expedient for these worthy parents to adopt in such a case, but to dismiss at once the hypocrisy of an illusory diction, and frankly avow, that, as to the point of virtue and matter of conscience involved in the honesty enjoined on the clergyman, that is all a joke; but that the plain thing is, there is a *professional propriety* in the clergyman's cultivating the quality in question, and a *professional convenience* in the lawyer's despising it.

The remainder of the essay briefly traces, without affecting any novelty of system, the proper course of a young clergyman's studies, previously to his going to college, at college, and in his subsequent years. The French and English modes of eloquence are contrasted, and the latter, for very good reasons, preferred. There are some plain and useful suggestions of methods of discipline, by which the preacher should accomplish himself as a good speaker. He is advised to study the pulpit manners of living preachers, not for so poor and absurd an object as the imitation of even the best of them, but to perfect his abstract idea of excellence by means of a consideration of various examples, better and worse,—for he recommends the student to hear some of the worst specimens as well as the best. Among the vilest sort, he says, “should be classed all those clerical coxcombs, who show that they are more intent on the nice management of a cambric handkerchief, or the display of a brilliant ring on their white hands, than upon the truths of the gospel, or the salvation of their auditors.”

He concludes by recommending the clergyman to acquaint himself accurately with the various modes of faith, worship, and religious establishment, in our own and other countries, in order to keep himself clear of bigotry and party violence, and

to become qualified to act the part of a wise and benevolent moderator among others.

On taking leave of the clerical profession, the author appears to take a final and willing leave of religion. The word is admitted, indeed, two or three times, in enumerating the requisite instructions for the other professions; it is introduced just as a notice that the subject has been duly disposed of already; and the writer appears glad to be thus left at full liberty to sketch the whole scheme of the education of the soldier, physician, lawyer, and statesman, without formally including this ungracious article. Such a thing as a solemn regard to the Governor of the world, and a rigorous adherence to his revealed laws, was deemed too trifling or too fanatical to be brought forward in each of the delineations of professional excellence, as a purifier of motives, as a prescriber of ends, and a regulator in the choice of means, in every department of human action. It was not that the author was anxious to avoid repetition; for most of the other requisite branches of instruction, and qualities of character, which have been illustrated and enforced as indispensable or highly useful for one profession, are again fully insisted on with reference to another, and still another. Nor do we complain of this repetition. The value of what may be called a philosophical memory, of a most carefully cultivated reasoning faculty, of intellectual and moral self-command, of a certain portion of learning and science, and of extensive knowledge of mankind, is obviously so great to all persons employed in important concerns, that the reader is willing and pleased to have them brought again in view, in order to its being shown in *what manner* they are indispensable in the education of the physician, or the lawyer, or the statesman. But, while such ample liberty is taken of enlarging again, in the successive divisions of the work, on several qualifications which are not merely professional, but are indispensable to professional men, just because they are indispensable to all enlightened and useful men, we own we cannot help receiving an unfavourable impression of the moral quality of a work, from seeing so careful an omission, (except in the part where it was unavoidably to be noticed as professionally necessary,) of that one qualification of human character, which is the only secure basis of any virtue, and gives the purest lustre to every talent.

The third essay is on Military and Naval Education. In

undertaking to sketch the proper education for the several professions, Mr. Edgeworth has omitted, apparently by design, to premise any observations tending to fix the moral estimate of each, for the assistance of those persons who are compelled to consult a delicate conscience in choosing the professions of their children. A few observations of this kind might not have been out of place, at the beginning of an essay on the method of making a soldier; for such a conscience may perversely raise a very strong question, whether it be *right* to destine a child to the occupation of slaying men; and, happily, for our country, (or unhappily, as we believe it will be more according to the current moral principles of the times to say,) there are a certain proportion of people who cannot dismiss in practice their convictions of right, even though flattered by a presumption that their names, in their sons, might attain the splendour of military fame. We cannot be unaware how much offence there are persons capable of taking, at a plain description of war in the terms expressive of its chief operation. And it is, to be sure, very hard that what has been bedizened with the most magnificent epithets of every language, what has procured for so many men the idolatry of the world, what has crowned them with royal, imperial, and, according to the usual slang on the subject, "immortal" honours, what has obtained their apotheosis in history and poetry,—it is hard and vexatious that this same adored maker of emperors and demi-gods, should be reducible in literal truth of description to "the occupation of slaying men," and should therefore hold its honours at the mercy of the first gleam of sober sense that shall break upon mankind. But, however whimsical it may appear to recollect that the great business of war is slaughter, however deplorably low-minded it may appear to regard all the splendour of fame with which war has been blazoned, much in the same light as the gilding of that hideous idol to which the Mexicans sacrificed their human hecatombs, however foolish it may be thought to make a difficulty of consenting to merge — the eternal laws of morality in the policy of states, and however presumptuous it may seem to condemn so many privileged, and eloquent, and learned, and reverend personages, as any and every war is sure to find its advocates,—it remains an obstinate fact, that there are some men of such perverted perceptions as to apprehend that revenge, rage and cruelty, blood and fire, wounds, shrieks, groans, and death, with an infinite ac-

companiment of collateral crimes and miseries, are the elements of what so many besotted mortals have worshipped in every age under the title of "glorious war." To be told that this is just the common-place with which dull and envious moralists have always railed against martial glory, will not in the slightest degree modify their apprehension of a plain matter of fact. What signifies it whether moralists are dull, envious, and dealers in common-place, or not? No matter who says it, nor from what motive; the fact is, that war consists of the components here enumerated, and is therefore an infernal abomination, when maintained for any object, and according to any measures, not honestly within the absolute necessities of defence. In these justifying necessities, we include the peril to which another nation with perfect innocence on its part may be exposed, from the injustice of a third power; as in the instance of the Dutch people, saved by Elizabeth from being destroyed by Spain. Now it needs not be said that wars, justifiable, on *either* side, on the pure principles of lawful defence, are the rarest things in history. Whole centuries all over darkened with the horrors of war may be explored from beginning to end, without perhaps finding two instances in which any one belligerent power can be pronounced to have adopted every precaution, and made every effort, concession, and sacrifice, required by Christian morality, in order to avoid war; to have entered into it with extreme reluctance, to have entertained while prosecuting it, an ardent desire for peace, promptly seizing every occasion and expedient of conciliation; to have sincerely forsworn all ambitious objects, to have spurned the foolish pride of not being the first to offer peace, and to have ended the war the very first hour that it was found that candid negotiation and moderate terms would be acceded to by the enemy. It is certain, at least, that the military history of this country is not the record where such examples are to be sought. But it may be presumed, we suppose, that those parents whose moral principles are to be of any use to their children, will abhor the idea to their sons being employed in any war that has not the grounds of justification here enumerated. But then, in order to their feeling themselves warranted to educate those sons for the business of war, they must have a firm assurance that the moral principles of their nation, or its government, are about to become so transformed, that there shall be, during the lives of their children, no war which shall

not, on the part of their country, stand within the justifying conditions that we have specified. And let a conscientious parent seriously reflect, whether there be any good cause for entertaining such an assurance. But, unless he has such an assurance, he gives his son to be shaped and finished, like a sword or a bayonet in a Birmingham manufactory, to be employed in deeds of slaughter, righteous or iniquitous, just as may be determined by the persons in power, to whom he must sell his services unconditionally, and whose determinations may probably enough be guided by the most depraved principles; while there is this unfortunate difference between the youth and the sword, that the youth who is thus becoming an instrument of slaughter, cannot still be divested of the accountability of a moral agent. A melancholy case! that the father should have cause to deplore the impossibility of his son's being at once an accomplished soldier and an idiot.—If a time shall come when the nation and its government shall manifest, with any thing like a sufficient security for permanently manifesting, half as much moderation as they have shown pride and ambition, and half as decided an attachment to peace as they have shown violent passion for war, during the last half century, then the parent's conscientious scruples may be turned from the general question of the morality of the military employment, to the particular considerations of its probable influence on his son's character, and its dangers to his life; that is to say, if all such considerations, and the profession itself, are not by that time set aside by the final cessation of war. In the mean time, conscientious parents may do well to resign the ambition of training sons to martial glory, to those fathers—a plentiful complement—who will laugh at the sickly conscience which scruples to devote a youth to the profession of war, on the ground that the wars in which he shall be employed may be iniquitous.

We are not sure that Mr. Edgeworth would not join in this laugh, as he makes very light of whatever morality has to do in the concern. He contemplates with the utmost coolness, not only the possibility that his young hero may be employed in an unjust cause, (in which case he is here recommended to take no responsibility on his conscience, but mind his proper business of killing and slaying,) but the certainty that the prescribed education for a military life will powerfully tend to promote and perpetuate a state of war. He says,

“ After quitting his academy, it is scarcely possible that a young man, who has acquired all the knowledge, and caught all the enthusiasm necessary for his profession, should not ardently wish for war, that he may have opportunities of distinguishing himself. Martial enthusiasm and a humane philosophical love of peace are incompatible, therefore military pupils should not be made philosophers, or they cease to be soldiers, and how then can we expect to be defended ?”—P. 194.

Thus it is plainly asserted, that a rightly conducted military education will inspire its subjects with an ardent passion against the nation's being at peace. Now let it be considered, that of the numerous youths to be thus educated, and therefore inspired with this passion, a considerable proportion will be sons of the nobility, who form a branch of the legislature, a kind of permanent council to the king ; that another large proportion are from the families of the prodigious number of executive functionaries of the state, through all their gradations ; and that a very numerous supply is from the families of wealth and influence throughout the country, whose direct or collateral relations have seats in the House of Commons : let all this be reflected on but five minutes ; let it be considered that the younger sons of the nobility, when thus educated, must be provided for at all events, even if they were *not* burning for martial enterprize ; that in the descending ranks of family and wealth, who send their representatives to the House of Commons, the modern habits of living have created certain necessities very powerfully tending to influence the fathers of these young heroes to promote in that House, in person, or by their friends, such national schemes as will furnish employment for their sons ; and that the generous ambition, as it will be called, of these high-spirited young men, always therefore the favourites and idols of their families and connexions, will probably have no little direct influence on the volitions of their parliamentary relatives. Let any man think of all this influence, acting in reinforcement of that horror of peace which may prevail as much in the government and a great part of the nation another half century, as it has prevailed during the last, and say whether there can be any better security for a constant national disposition to a state of war. The nation is to stand, therefore, in this desirable predicament ; that the grand expedient for defending it against enemies, is to be most exactly calculated to set it continually on finding and making enemies.

Such are the natural effects of our author's scheme of military education, according to his own statement of its tendency, on which statement he appears not to have the slightest idea that any one can be so wrong-headed as to found an objection to such an education. It is no business of ours, in this place, to enter into a dull and useless discussion whether it be practicable to devise a scheme of education which should qualify young men to be efficient soldiers, whenever duty should appear to summon them to act in that capacity, and should equally, at the same time, cultivate all the moral principles that would inspire a detestation of war. But it is our business, as Christian censors and monitors, to say, that, if this is not practicable, no parent can educate his son for war, without a complete virtual abjuration of Christianity; as it is obviously impossible for him at once to be faithful to the laws of an institution which commands every thing gentle, pacific, preventive of strife and suffering, and repressive of ambition, and deliberately to excite in his son an ardent passion for that employment, of which the grand elements are fury, anguish, and destruction. The laws of this institution are fundamental and absolute, forming the primary obligation on all its believers, and reducing all other rules of action to find their place as they can, in due subordination,—or to find no place at all. No arguments in favour of this military passion are to be allowed from such topics as *national glory*, unless it is to be maintained, that Christianity has provided for a suspension of its own principles, in favour of that pride and ambition generally implied in this phrase. And if it has made an exception in favour of these, why should it not be equally indulgent to any other depraved feelings connected with other kinds of corrupt interest? that is, why has it an existence, as a moral authority? It had better not exist at all, if it were an institution which enforced gentleness and quietness on mankind, just as if to give the more destructive effect to an exception sanctioning martial madness to harass and consume them. Truly it would deserve all the contempt which such persons as our author feel for it, if it were a system maintaining itself rigidly obligatory on those whose refined moral sensibility yields to admit the obligation, but not obligatory on those whose fierce passions disdain its control; that is, a thing of which the obligation depends on whether men are willing to acknowledge it or not.

We have mentioned what is called national glory, as this is one of the chief idols which men of war are always required to worship, and to which there is hardly any thing in the whole moral system which they will not be justified, by the generality of politicians and moralists in these times, for sacrificing. But national defence is Mr. Edgeworth's immediate plea, in justification of a mode of training which must deprave the moral sentiments of a considerable portion of our youth: "How can we" otherwise, he asks, "expect to be defended?" We have already said, in reply to this, How can we, at this rate, be ever free from perils, created by our own foolish disposition to seize or make occasions for war? But we add another question of still graver import:—On the supposition that there is a righteous Governor of the world, how can we expect to be defended, if we industriously promote, in the minds of a large and the most active proportion of our youth, a spirit which he abominates, and the national conduct naturally resulting from which he has threatened to visit with punishment? This question, indeed, it must be acknowledged, can pertinently be addressed only to the "fanatics;" as we have had extensive opportunity of observing, that the persons so reputed alone show any real practical recognition of a divine government in speculating on the policy of states. It is to be hoped that all these fanatics, in consistency with their faith in such a government, beware of soliciting the demon of martial ambition into the minds of their sons; convinced that no possible combination of circumstances under heaven can sanctify a spirit the reverse of their religion, and that, as a general law, a state in danger has just so much the greater cause to despair of being defended, as it prepares its defence in a spirit careless of divine injunctions, and scornful of a reliance on Providence. Till the right spirit shall find its way into nations and governments, it remains to be seen what that Providence will suffer to be effected among them by that valorous ambition which Mr. Edgeworth wishes to inflame, and all the glory of which—except its success, and its efficacy to annihilate national danger—has richly crowned this country during the last half century.

If the question were still urged, But how can a nation be defended? it may be answered at once, that a nation whose piety and justice are approved by heaven, (and how is a nation of an opposite character to have any security of being defend-

ed, whatever be its ostensible means?) such a nation may be defended by the divine agency giving efficacy to the operation of such numbers, such military apparatus, and such resources of science, as the purely defensive spirit would always keep partly prepared, and would soon make ready for action, in an enlightened nation, conscious of having the most valuable possessions to lose.

Our author's morality appears on the same level, in the doctrine that it is not for military men, except those of the very highest rank, to form any judgment of their own on the right or wrong of the cause in which they are to be employed. That is, in the one employment which is the most awful on earth, that of inflicting death on human beings in the mass, men are not to consider their actions as of consequence enough for the cognizance of conscience; they may divest themselves of the inconvenience of moral accountableness, till they return to the solemn functions of buying and selling, and the ordinary proprieties of life. In the civil economy of society, the life of an individual is regarded as of such importance, that it must not be touched without a most grave and punctilious process; witnesses are attested and rigorously examined, juries are sworn and charged, laws are explained, learned judges preside, and are even allowed by their office to assume in a certain degree the character of advocates for the accused; and should any one of all these persons concerned, be proved to have acted in the process as a man divested of moral responsibility, his character is blasted for ever. But let an ambitious despot, or a profligate ministry, only give out the word that we must be at war with this or the other nation,—and then a man who has no personal complaint against any living thing of that nation, who may not be certain it has committed any real injury against his own nation or government, nay, who possibly may be convinced by facts against which he cannot shut his eyes, that his own nation or government is substantially in the wrong, then this man, under the sanction of the word *war*, may, with a conscience entirely unconcerned, immediately go and cut down human beings as he would cut down a copse. It is nothing to him if the people he is to co-operate in attacking are peaceful, free, and happy, and that this very freedom and happiness may have been the cause of the war, by exciting the malignity of the aggressor. The peaceful valleys and hills of Switzerland can be no more sacred

in his view, than the borders of the most arrogant and malicious rival. The officers who invaded and subdued that country were, all but the commander-in-chief, as virtuously employed as those who fell in attempting to defend it. And, admitting that the popular resistance in Spain is really an effort of a long-degraded people to obtain liberty, the invaders, excepting perhaps the marshal dukes, are as honourably occupied as their opponents; for they are destroying men and desolating the country, under the modest forbearance, enjoined by our moralist, to arrogate to themselves a right of judging of the merits of the cause. And should they receive orders from their superiors to perpetrate the barbarities of Herod, they have only to obey, and exult in their exemption from moral responsibility. The exemption goes this length, and every length, or it cannot be proved to exist at all; for if an accountability is to take place at some point, and the man's own judgment is to decide where, he will be compelled to begin his examination, and therefore to acknowledge his accountability, at the very first moral question that can be put concerning his employment.

The young soldier from Mr. Edgeworth's school is not to be eagerly set on duelling, but neither is he in all cases to decline that honourable practice. "The best character," he says, "a young man can establish on going into the army, is that of being determined to fight in a proper cause, but averse to quarrel for trifles." He strongly recommends fencing as a part of an officer's education.

"It might again revive the custom among gentlemen, of fighting duels with swords instead of pistols: a custom, which would at least diminish the number of duellists, by confining them to a certain class in society. Gentlemen would then be in some measure protected from the insolence of uneducated temerity, and every ill-bred upstart would not find himself upon a footing with his superior because he can fire a pistol, or dares to stand a shot. If any distinction of ranks is to be supported, if any idea of subordination is to be maintained in a country, and what nation can exist without these, education must mark the boundaries, and maintain the privileges of the different orders. The honour and the life of an officer and a senator, and that of a mere idle man of the town, ought not to be put on the same level, nor should their differences be adjusted by one and the same appeal to the trigger." P. 152.

This expedient for preserving so valuable a privilege to the better sort, for keeping duels a strictly genteel amusement,

would prove ineffectual ; for these “ idle men of the town ” would, in spite of their description, be soon stimulated to qualify themselves in the art, on which they found their equality with the “ officers and senators ” was to depend ; and some of them, of the true bravo species, would soon acquire the power to overawe their pretended superiors. Mr. Edgeworth might know that some of these men of the town practise shooting at a mark, expressly in preparation for “ affairs of honour,” with as much assiduity as would finish them in the use of the sword. Under the appearance of idle men of the town, there will always, in the metropolis, be a class of keen desperate adventurers by profession, who regard what Mr. Edgeworth may call “ their superiors,” as their *game* ; and so long as gentlemen of the senatorian, or whatever other dignified sort, choose, in defiance of morality and law, to maintain the practice of “ appeal ” to either the “ trigger ” or the sword, they will deservedly be at the mercy of the more unerring pistols or swords of these formidable men. As to the supposed higher value of the “ honour and the life of the officer or senator,” surely the man is the best judge himself what the one or the other is worth ; he is not *obliged* to appraise them in a pistol-ling match with “ every ill-bred upstart, or idle man of the town,” and, if he chooses to do it, it is of course because he judges they are things fit for such a traffic. And, truly, whatever price they might have borne before, he cannot well estimate them too meanly by the time that he has measured his ground with his worthless antagonist, since community in crime is the grand equalizer in degradation. By the time he has consented to place himself in that situation, his “ honour,” at any rate, is hardly worth the trouble of a preference of one weapon to another, and his “ life ” is worth—mentioning in to-morrow’s newspaper as a thing that went out in a gentlemanly style. In the name, then, of that liberty, so much favoured by the government and tribunals of this Christian country, of violating in this point morality and law, let not the man be forced to take the pains of learning an additional art in order to dispose of his couple of trifles, “ honour and life,” which can be disposed of with less trouble in the mode now in fashion.

The reader will be somewhat surprised to find that this determination to fight duels on all proper occasions, is to coalesce, in the young soldier’s mind, with a *religion* which it

shall be worth his while to maintain with an equal constancy of determination. We are not certain, even, whether the same weapons are not, in the last resort, to be employed; since "all interference with his religious sentiments, whether by ridicule or remonstrance," is represented as such "an infringement of his rights and his independence," as we should suppose he will be bound to resent with lead or steel.

"As a young officer will early mix with varieties of dissipated company, his religious principles should not trust for their defence to any of those outworks which wit can demolish; he should not be early taught to be scrupulous or strict in the observance of trifling forms; his important duties, and his belief in the essential tenets of his religion, should not rest upon these slight foundations, lest, if they be overthrown, the whole superstructure should fall. When his young companions perceive that he is not precise or punctilious, but sincere and firm in his belief; when they see that he avoids all controversy with others, and considers all interference with his own religious sentiments, whether by ridicule or remonstrance, as an infringement of his rights and his independence; he will not only be left unmolested in his tenets, but he will command general respect. It is of the utmost importance that the early religious impressions made on the mind of a soldier should not be of a gloomy or dispiriting sort; they should be connected with hope, not with fear, or they will tend to make him cowardly instead of brave. Those who believe that they are secure of happiness hereafter, if to the best of their power they live and die doing their duty, will certainly meet danger, and if necessary, death, with more courage than they can ever do who are oppressed and intimidated by superstitious doubts and horrors, terrors which degrade man, and which are inconsistent with all ideas of the goodness and beneficence of God."—P. 143.

It should seem to be conveyed, in this piece of instruction, that it is in some certain degree at the option of religious teachers *what* they shall inculcate as religion; and that therefore, in their religious instructions to their military pupils, they can considerably accommodate to the purpose of producing bravery. We may also learn that a religion which involves "terrors" needs not be believed by any of us, soldiers, authors, or critics, any testimony to the contrary in the Bible notwithstanding. As to the phrase "if they live and die doing their duty," nothing can be more indefinite, or even equivocal; for, according to our author, a military man may die doing his duty though he dies in a duel, or, as far as we see, if he dies in the act of sacking a harmless town, which some atrocious tyrant, or tyrant's tool, has sworn to annihilate.

After so much more than enough on the moral complexion of this long essay on military education, there needs but very

few words on its other qualities. In common with the others, it has a certain defect, very sensibly felt by a reader of indifferent memory; that of not prominently marking the several stages and topics in the scheme. But this perhaps could not have been remedied by any other means than a formal division into a number of sections with distinct titles and arguments. The multifarious assemblage of precepts and illustrations includes, we should suppose, almost all the expedients most conducive to excite the spirit and finish the accomplishments of a soldier. Many directions are given for preparing the young hero, from his infancy, for the toils and privations of his future service.

The discipline of stripes must never be applied to him, of whatever perversity or mischief he may be guilty. Every thing must be done by an appeal to his pride, which passion is to be promoted and stimulated in every possible way, as the sovereign virtue of the military character; nor is any prescription given for transmuting it into the opposite Christian virtue just at the extreme moment when he is finally laying down his arms, if he should then be apprehensive that this military character may be an uncouth garb in which to appear in the other world. The proper discipline for creating courage is pointed out; amusements bearing some relation to the operation of war are suggested; it is advised that the boy be induced to employ himself sometimes in familiar practical mechanics; be early made master of the terms and elements of mathematics; be carefully trained to an accurate use of his eyes, in order to judge of distances and relative magnitudes; be taught drawing; learn some of the modern languages, but not expend much of his time on Latin and Greek. He is to be made conversant with the lives of warriors, and even the stories of chivalry. But the book of mightiest inspiration is the *Iliad*, of which it was indispensably necessary to mention yet once more, that it sent "Macedonia's madman and the Swede," to draw glorious lines of blood and devastation across certain portions of the surface of the earth, beckoned on by the Homeric ghost of Achilles. The character of this amiable hero has been "fated," it seems, like those of the Christian apostles and martyrs, to meet with detractors among the base-minded moderns.

"Some modern writers have been pleased to call Achilles a mad butcher, wading in carnage; but all our love for the arts of peace, and all our

respect for that humane philosophy which proscribes war, cannot induce us to join in such brutal abuse, such unseemly degradation of the greatest military hero upon poetic record ;”

and there follows a portion of useful composition on the “heroic beauties in his character ;” in answer to all which it is sufficient to ask, But *was* he not, after all, “a mad butcher wading in carnage ?” There are many excellent observations on an officer’s conduct in war, on the proper combination, while he is a subaltern, of subordination with independence of character, on presence of mind, on the mode of attaching soldiers, and inspiring them with confidence, and on that vigour of good sense which, disdaining to be confined to the principles of any school of war, can adapt every operation pointedly to the immediate state of the circumstances. The whole essay is enlivened by numerous historical examples, selected in general with great judgment and felicity.

The remaining Essays are on the education for the Medical Profession, for the duties of Country Gentlemen, for the profession of the Law, and for Public Life, with a short concluding chapter on the education of a Prince. They involve such a multiplicity of particulars, as to be beyond the power of analysis, had we any room left to attempt it. Nor is there any bold novelty of general principles that can be stated as pervading the whole mass ; unless, indeed, we may cite, as a novelty, the author’s detestation of the political profligacy and low intrigues of what are called public men. This appears in many parts of the book, and is conspicuously displayed in the Essay on the education of men intended for Public Life. And it is quite time it should be displayed by every honest man, since the public mind habitually leans to a forgetfulness or a tolerance of those vices of public men, to which the public interests are made a sacrifice. Thus far is well ; but when our author proceeds confidently to remedy all these evils by means of the inculcation of pride, honour, and magnanimity, (which is only another name for pride, when it is found in such company,) we cannot help wondering through what preternatural splitting of his faculties into a very intelligent part and a very whimsical one, it has happened that the same individual has been in many directions an excellent observer and thinker, but in others a deplorable visionary.

VI.

B R I T I S H S T A T E S M E N .

Lives of British Statesmen. By JOHN MACDIARMID, Esq.,
*Author of an Inquiry into the System of National Defence in
Great Britain, and of an Inquiry into the Principles of Sub-
ordination.*

IF we have not learnt to feel for statesmen, as such, a sufficient share of that reverential respect which pronounces their names with awe, which stands amazed at the immensity of their wisdom, which looks up to them as the concentrated reason of the human species, which trembles to insinuate or to hear insinuated against them the slightest suspicion of obliquity of understanding or corruption of moral principle, and which regards it as quite a point of religion to defend their reputation, it has not been that we have not received many grave instructions and rebukes on this head from much better men. A hundred times it has been repeated to us, that a peculiar and extraordinary genius is requisite to constitute a statesman ; that men, who by situation and office are conversant with great concerns, acquire a dignity and expansion of mind ; that those who can manage the affairs of nations prove themselves by the fact itself to be great men ; that their elevated position gives them an incomparably clearer and more comprehensive view of national subjects than is to be attained by us on the low level of private life ; that we ought, in deference to them, to repress the presumption of our understandings ; that, in short, it is our duty to applaud or be silent.

With a laudable obsequiousness we have often tried to conform ourselves to our duty, at least as prescribed in the latter part of this alternative ; and we have listened respectfully to long panegyrics on the sagacity, fortitude, and disinterestedness of the chief actors and advisers in state affairs, and to inculcations of the gratitude due to men who will thus conde-

scend, in their lofty stations, (which at the same time it is presumed they can claim to hold for no other purpose,) to toil and care for us the vulgar mass of mankind. Presently these laudatory and hortatory strains would soften into an elegiac plaintiveness, bewailing the distresses of men in high situations in the state. The pathetic song has deplored the oppressive labours of thought required in forming their schemes, their cruel exposure to the persecutions of an adverse party, the difficulty of preserving harmony of operation in a wide and complex system involving many men and many dispositions, their anxiety in providing for the wants of the state, the frequent failure of their best concerted measures, their sleepless nights, their aching heads, and their sufferings from the ungrateful reproaches of the people. Here our impatience has overcome our good resolutions, and we have been moved to reply. We have said, Is not the remedy for all these sorrows at all times in their reach? They can quit their stations and all the attendant distresses whenever they please, in behalf of other men who are waiting, eager almost to madness, to obtain their share of all the vexations you are commiserating. But while you are so generously deploring the hardships of their situation, they are anxiously devising every possible contrivance to secure themselves in possession of it, and nothing less than the power that put them in can wrench them out. It is vastly reasonable to be requiring lenient judgments on the conduct, and respectful sympathy for the feelings, of public men, while we see with what a violent passion power and station are sought, with what desperate grappling claws of iron they are retained, and with what grief and mortification they are lost. It might be quite time enough, we should think, to commence this strain of tenderness, when in order to fill the places of power and emolument it has become necessary to drag by force retiring virtue and modest talent from private life, and to retain them in those situations by the same compulsion, in spite of the most earnest wishes to retreat, excited by delicacy of conscience, and a disgust at the pomp of state. So long as men are pressing as urgently into the avenues of place and power as ever the genteel rabble of the metropolis have pushed and crowded into the play-house to see the new actor, and so long as a most violent conflict is maintained between those who are in power and those who want to supplant them, we think statesmen form by eminence the class of per-

sons, to whose characters both the contemporary examiner and the historian are not only authorized, but in duty bound, to administer justice in its utmost rigour, without one particle of extenuation. While forcing their way toward offices in the state, and while maintaining the possession once acquired, they are apprised, or might and should be apprised, of the nature of the responsibility, and it is certain they are extremely well apprised of the privileges. They know that the public welfare depends, in too great a degree, on their conduct, and that the people have a natural instinctive prejudice in favour of their leaders, and are disposed to confide to the utmost extent. They know that a measure of impunity unfortunate for the public is enjoyed by statesmen, their very station affording the means both of concealment and defence for their delinquencies. They know that in point of emolument they are more than paid from the labours of the people for any services they render; and that they are not bestowing any particular favour on the country by holding their offices, as there are plenty of men, about as able and as good as themselves, ready to take their places if they would abdicate them. When to all this is added the acknowledged fact that the majority of this class of men have trifled with their high responsibility, and taken criminal advantage of their privileges, we can have no patience to hear of any claims for special indulgence of charity, in reading and judging the actions of statesmen.

On the ground of morality in the abstract, separately from any consideration of the effect of his representations, the biographer of statesmen is bound to a very strict application of the rules of justice, since these men constitute, or at least belong to, the uppermost class of the inhabitants of the earth. They have stronger inducements arising from situation, than other men, to be solicitous for the rectitude of their conduct; their station has the utmost advantage for commanding the assistance of whatever illumination a country contains; they see on the large scale the effect of all the grand principles of action; they make laws for the rest of mankind, and they direct the execution of justice. If the eternal laws of morality are to be applied with a soft and lenient hand in the trial and judgment of such an order of men, it will not be worth while to apply them at all to the subordinate classes of mankind; as a morality that exacts but little where the means and the responsibility are the greatest, would betray itself to contempt

by pretending to sit in solemn judgment on the humbler subjects of its authority. The laws of morality should operate, like those of nature, in the most palpable manner on the largest substances.

Another reason for the rigid administration of justice to the characters of men that have been high in the state, is to secure the utility of history, or rather to preserve it from becoming to the last degree immoral and noxious. For since history is almost entirely occupied with the actions of this class of men, and for the much greater part with their vices and their crimes, and the calamitous consequences, it is easy to see that a softened mode of awarding justice to these characters will turn the whole force of history to the effect of depraving our moral principles, by partially conciliating both our feelings and judgments to those hateful courses of action, of which we are already very much too tolerant in consequence of being from our childhood familiarized to the view of them, in every account of the past and present state of the world. And in this way we are inclined to think that history has actually been, on the whole, the enemy of morality. Its readers will have too light an impression of the atrocity of great crimes and great criminals. Great crimes constitute so large a proportion of the historian's materials for constructing splendid exhibitions, that if he does not insensibly become almost partial to them, as a general does to a band of the most cruel savages whose ferocity he has repeatedly employed to obtain his victories, his hatred admits at least a certain softening of literary interest; and in many a glowing description of enormous wickedness, we fancy we see the hand of the painter or poet rather than the moral censor. Artful combinations of odious circumstances, epithets to aggravate each indignant line, eloquence of execration, are possibly not spared; but we still find ourselves rather invited as spectators of a splendid tragedy, than summoned as jurors in a solemn court of justice. The diminution or modification, in the historian's mind, of the abhorrence of crimes, in consequence of the benefit which he derives from them as striking materials for his work, aids the operation of any other cause which may tend to render him indulgent to the actor of them. And often the great criminal has had some one virtue, or at least some very showy faults, adapted, in the historian's view, to relieve and even extenuate the account of his wickedness; he might have munificence, a

love of letters, a very lofty kind of ambition, or what a lax morality would term a liberal love of pleasure ; at any rate, he probably had talents, and this is perhaps after all the most seductive of the distinctions by which a bad man can dazzle our judgments. The historian, besides, acquires a kind of partiality for an eminent actor in the times and transactions which he describes, from even the circumstance of being, in imagination, so long in his company. In prosecuting his work, he returns to this person each morning, for weeks, months, or even years ; the interest of the literary labour consists in following this person through the whole train of his proceedings ; the disposition for quarrelling with him gradually subsides ; the odious moral features are familiarized to the view ; while perhaps the conviction of his great attainments, and the wonder at his achievements, are progressively augmented ; extenuations suggest themselves, and occasionally even partial claims on applause ; the writer becomes a kind of participator in the activity and importance of the transactions, while he is clear of all the guilt : and thus by degrees the rigour of justice is forgotten, and flagrant iniquity is exhibited with so little prominence of turpitude, that it depends very much on the moral state of the reader's own mind, whether he shall regard it with indulgence or detestation. We shall not wonder at the bad morality of history, if we combine this view of the injurious effect of the historian's studies on his mind, with the consideration that the eminent historians of antiquity were pagans, and the most distinguished ones of modern times very near the moral level of paganism, by means of their irreligion.

It is, again, very desirable that a rigid justice should be maintained in delineating and recording the characters and actions of statesmen, because it is in the nature of the people, in all countries, to feel a kind of superstitious veneration for those who are so much above them as to have the command of their public affairs. Place men, of whatever sort, in power, and there will need no burning fiery furnace to intimidate their fellow-citizens into reverential prostration. On the mere strength of their situation they shall gain credit to almost all they pretend, and acknowledgment of right to all they arrogate ; fine talents and fine qualities in abundance shall be ascribed to them ; and the crowd shall look up with awe to the beings that can make speeches and enactments,

appointments and imposts, treaties and wars. Or even if the deficiency of integrity and abilities is so notorious as to force a reluctant conviction on the people, the high station secures a certain tolerance which a man in humbler life must not too confidently expect for vices and incapacity. It is matter of great difficulty and effort for these men to sin away the whole stock of credit and partiality, which sounding titles and elevated stations have raised for them in the popular mind. Even our pride is in their favour; our pride as respecting ourselves is unwilling to believe, that we are all passing our lives in submissive homage to persons not at all our betters in wisdom or morals; and our pride of national comparison feels it absolutely necessary to maintain, that we are wise enough to put as much wisdom at our head as any people in the world can boast.—We mean this as a description not of the English nation in particular; it is the case of every nation.

Now this superstitious respect for persons possessing consequence in the state is injurious to the people in two ways; it deteriorates their moral principles, and it endangers their political condition. If statesmen, as a class, had been proved by experience to be the purest of all saints, then this excess of reverence for them might be a most salutary sentiment, as reinforcing the attractions and authority of virtue by all the influence held over our minds by these its noblest examples. But it has been found till now, or at least till very lately, that statesmen in general deem it necessary to keep in their possession about the same quantity of vice as their neighbours; and the respect which the people feel for the men, on account of their station, prevents the just degree of contempt or abhorrence for the vice. All the palliation which vice acquires, as beheld in connexion with respected personages, it is sure afterwards to retain as viewed in itself; the principles therefore by which its noxiousness should be esteemed are depraved; and all who are disposed to like it will gladly take the privilege of committing it at the same reduced expense of conscience and character, as their superiors. In every community the estimate of the evil of immorality, in the abstract, will infallibly be reduced nearly to the level of that opinion of its evil which is entertained respecting it, as committed by the most privileged class of that community.

As to the danger which threatens the political condition of the people, no illustration can well make it plainer. If states-

men were an importation of celestials, partaking in no degree of the selfishness and perversity of mortal men, it would be a delightful thing for us to throw into their hands an unlimited power over all the great concerns of a nation, and prosecute our individual purposes, and indulge our tastes and domestic affections, in perfect security that all would go right in the general affairs of the nation. Or if the constitution of things were such, that the interest of the leaders were necessarily coincident entirely with the interest of the people, it might be safe to dismiss the anxiety of vigilance under the presiding direction of even a party of mere human creatures; as the passengers in a ship give themselves very tranquilly to their amusements or their sleep, because they are certain the official conductors of the vessel have necessarily just the same interest in its safety as themselves. But it is obvious, that innumerable occasions will present themselves to men in power, of serving their own interests quite distinctly from those of the people, and decidedly to their detriment. Indeed, the personal interests of these men are necessarily opposed to the grand popular interest of freedom itself, insomuch that no people ever long maintained their internal liberty, who did not maintain it by precaution against the very statesmen they were obliged to employ. Every thing that ascertains the freedom of the people necessarily fixes the bounds to the power of those who are placed over them; and it would be requiring too much of human nature, to expect that men, whom ambition, for the most part, has raised to the stations of power, should not regard with an evil eye these limitations to the scope of their predominant passion, and consider them as obstacles which they are to remove or surmount if they can. And their high station, as we have observed, affords them many facilities for concealing and protecting themselves, in the prosecution of measures for the gradual subversion of liberty; in which course and for which purpose very many statesmen, according to the testimony of history, have employed the powers and resources vested, and the confidence reposed in them, by the nation, as the persons officially engaged to guard its interests. Now the thing which beyond all other things would be desired by men with such designs, is, the prevalence in the public mind of a blind veneration for statesmen, that attributes to them rectitude and talents of too high an order to be inspected and scrutinized and controlled by any profane

arrogance of the people. Under favour of this state of the popular mind, they have but to make pompous professions of patriotism, and act in tolerable concert, and they may obtain unlimited confidence while they are both wasting the immediate resources of the country, and assiduously sapping away all that which can enable each individual inhabitant to say, I am no man's property or slave. It is the duty therefore of all who wish well to mankind, to remonstrate against this pernicious infatuation ; and it is our official duty to represent that the biographical flatterers of statesmen are among the most wicked perverters of the public mind.

Mr. Macdiarmid is not of this class. His language is perhaps a little too indulgent, occasionally, to meet our ideas of the severe duties of the office he has chosen ; but we regard him on the whole as a faithful and impartial biographer. He never gets into such a current of panegyric that he cannot for his life stop to notice a fault. He appears in a considerable degree the friend of several of the eminent men whose actions he records ; but he is such a friend as, if he could have been contemporary and acquainted with any of them, would not have withheld those candid animadversions, which might have contributed to make them greater benefactors of the times, and greater ornaments to history. He does not profess to present their characters in any new light, nor to have drawn facts and anecdotes from rare and unpublished records ; but he thought it might not be an unacceptable service to the public to give a somewhat more ample, and a more minute and personal sketch, of these distinguished men, than can be found, or could with propriety be contained, in any one history of their times. Accordingly he has employed much industry and judgment in deducing, from the information supplied by a number of historical and biographical works, very clear narrations of the lives of Sir Thomas More, and Lords Burleigh, Strafford, and Clarendon. The narration is very successful in the point of keeping the individual always fully in view, while it is often necessarily extended, by the public nature of his actions, to the whole breadth of the national history of his times. The writer in general confines himself very strictly to his narration, and is very sparing of reflections ; a forbearance practised, no doubt, from the conviction, that a narrative written with fidelity, force, and discrimination, might in general be very safely left, from the obvious simplicity of its moral, to the

reader's own understanding. It is also a commendable modesty to keep at a great distance from the fault of those historians, who might seem to be persuaded, that the transactions they record took place positively for no other purpose on earth but to draw forth certain wise notions from their minds. Yet many readers, and we do not disclaim to be of the number, are indolent enough to wish the historian would just give the direction to their thoughts; and if he can manage to time his reflections well, and to avoid being very trite or prolix, we are very willing to divide with him the merit of being very philosophical on every circumstance of the narration. We are not, perhaps, of opinion, that Mr. Macdiarmid's reflections would have been more than usually profound; but they would have still further manifested that sound, liberal sense which is already so apparent. The style has quite the measured and equable form of set historical composition; it is however perspicuous, unaffected, and in a very respectable degree vigorous. The book offers a more speedy and elegant introduction, than was before attainable, to an acquaintance with four of the most distinguished characters in our political history.

With regard to the first of them, Sir Thomas More, we will acknowledge it must be nearly impossible for the historian of his life to avoid becoming very decidedly, and even enthusiastically, attached to him. No great harm would result from a relaxation, in this instance, of that law of severity under which we have represented that the lives of statesmen ought to be written; for no second instance of the same kind will be found in the subsequent political annals of England. Indeed, he is a person so *unique* in the records of statesmen, that we can see no chance that any utility in the way of example, would arise from a display of his life and character. Some small degree of similarity is pre-requisite as the basis of any reasonable hope of seeing an example imitated; and therefore it would seem very much in vain, as to this purpose, to display a statesman and courtier who was perfectly free from all ambition, from the beginning of his career to the end; who was brought into office and power by little less than compulsion; who met general flattery and admiration with a calm indifference, and an invariable perception of their vanity; who amidst the caresses of a monarch, longed to be with his children; who was the most brilliant and vivacious man in every society he entered into, and yet was more fond

of retirement even than other statesmen were anxious for public glare ; who displayed a real and cordial hilarity on descending from official eminence to privacy and comparative poverty ; who made all other concerns secondary to devotion ; and who, with the softest temper and mildest manners, had an inflexibility of principle, which never at any moment knew how to hesitate between a sacrifice of conscience and of life. The mind rests on this character with a fascination which most rarely seizes it in passing over the whole surface of history. In this progress we often meet with individuals that we greatly admire ; but the bare sentiment of admiration may fail to make us delighted with the ideal society of the object, or interested in its fate. In the company of Sir T. More, the admiration scarcely ever stands separate from the more kindly feelings ; it seems but to give the last emphasis to the inexpressible complacency with which we listen to him, converse with him, observe his movements, and follow him wherever he goes. If personally acquainted with such a man, we should, in absence from him, be incessantly haunted with a necessity and a passion to get near him again ; and should not only feel the most animated pleasure, but also, in spite of the contrast between our intellectual powers and his, should feel as if we had five times more sense than usual, when stimulated and supported by the vigour of a genius which seemed entirely to forget any comparison between itself and those around, which kindly lent itself to assist every one to think, and gladly aided any one to shine, while it had never once any other ambition than to diffuse happiness or impart instruction. The absence of every kind of selfishness, the matchless gayety and good humour which accompanied his great talents, and his wonderful facility of using them, divested of the least timidity every one that approached him, except pretenders and villains. His manner of displaying his talents delighted his friends, into such a total forgetfulness of fear, that only his exalted virtue could preserve to him that veneration, which again his facetiousness prevented from oppressing those who felt it. Perhaps there never was a person that possessed many various qualities in such perfect combination, as, in an equal degree with More, to make the effect of them all be felt in the operation of any one of them. His playful wit never put his severe virtue and his wisdom out of recollection ; and at the

same time it was acknowledged, that so imperial a virtue had never before been seen so much at its ease in the company of pleasantry and humorous fancy. The habitual influence, therefore, of his character, was a happy and most singular complexity of operation; as he could exert, and did almost involuntarily exert, not in succession and alternation, but at one and the same time, the wit, the philosopher, and the Christian.

Distinguished statesmen generally become what may be called technical characters; the whole human being becomes shaped into an official thing, and nature's own man, with free faculties, and warm sentiments, and unconstrained manners, has disappeared. An established process regulates the creature into a mechanical agency; the order of its manners is squared to the proper model, formed between the smooth complaisance of the courtier, and the assuming self-importance of the minister; the whole train of thinking turns on measures of state, on councils, acts, debates, and intrigues; and the character of the court, the cabinet, and senate, sticks to the being most inseparably, even in the domestic circle, in visits to friends, and in country rambles. In More, on the contrary, the general natural man was always predominant above any artificial character of office. The variety of his interest, the animation of his sentiments, and the strength of his powers, would not suffer affairs of state to repress the living impulses of his mind, or reduce to a formality of action that elasticity which played in all directions with infinite freedom. Even in the transactions of office, it appears that his wit sometimes threw its sparkles through the gravity of the judge. In reading the lives of most other statesmen, we seem to be making a very unmeaning and unentertaining visit, to see them among their secretaries, or going to their councils, or at their levees, or seated in their robes; in reading of More, it seems to be the statesman that makes a visit to us, in the dress of an ordinary person, with manners formed by no rule but kindness and good taste, talking on all subjects, casually suggested, with an easy vigour of sense, and no further reminding us of his station and its habits, than by the surprise now and then recurring on our own minds to recollect that so wonderfully free and pleasant a man is really a great officer of state.

More's character derives some adventitious lustre, from comparison with the persons most conspicuous in the public

affairs of England at that time. His being contemporary and intimately connected with Henry the Eighth, might seem as if intended to show in one view the two extremes of human nature. His modesty and disinterestedness contrast admirably with the proud insatiable ambition of Wolsey; his independence and magnanimity with the courtly servility which it is impossible not to impute to the otherwise excellent Cranmer.

Amidst the early display and fame of talents and learning, his favourite wish was to become a monk, but was overruled by his father, who was earnest for his adopting the profession of the law. This at length he did, and with the greatest success, notwithstanding he continued to direct a large proportion of his studies to classical literature and to theology. At the age of twenty-three he entered the House of Commons, in the latter part of the reign of Henry the Seventh, in which situation his first exertion was little less than the hazard of his life, by an eloquent resistance to an iniquitous demand of money, made by this tyrant, and which the fears of the house would have silently yielded but for the courageous virtue of More, which roused them to refuse the grant. He was, however, compelled, in consequence, to exchange the bar for complete retirement; but this only served to complete his knowledge, and mature his virtues, while the tenderest domestic relations occupied his affections, and all the time that could be spared from his studies. He returned to his practice at the accession of Henry the Eighth, whose favourite, after a little while, he very reluctantly became, and so continued for many years, notwithstanding that lofty integrity which never once made the smallest sacrifice of principle to the will of the monarch. After holding several important situations, he was constrained to accept that of high-chancellor, in which he administered justice with a promptitude and a disinterestedness beyond all former example, till the period of Henry's quarrel with the pope, respecting his divorce of the queen, and his marriage with Anne Boleyn. More foresaw that in his office of chancellor he should be compelled to an explicit opposition to the king, very dangerous to himself; and by earnest request obtained the acceptance of his resignation. In prosecuting his determination relative to the marriage, throwing off in consequence the authority of Rome altogether, and ultimately assuming himself the supremacy of the English church, the tyrant required the approbation, by oath, of the

chief persons in the state. Especially the approbation of More, though now but a private person, was of far greater importance to him than that of any other individual. He was aware that More was conscientiously unable to give this approbation, and knew well that nothing on earth could induce him to violate his conscience; yet, after repeated attempts at persuasion, he angrily insisted on his taking the several oaths, summoned him before a council, and gave him time to deliberate in prison. After enduring with unalterable patience and cheerfulness the severities of a year's imprisonment in the tower, he was brought to trial, condemned with the unhesitating haste which always distinguishes the creatures employed by a tyrant to effect his revenge by some mockery of law, and with the same haste consigned to execution. Imagination cannot represent a scene more affecting than the interview of More with his favourite daughter, nor a character of more elevation, or even more novelty, than that most singular vivacity with which, in the hour of death, he crowned the calm fortitude which he had maintained through the whole of the last melancholy year of his life. Thus one of the noblest beings in the whole world was made a victim to the malice of a remorseless crowned savage, whom it is the infamy of the age and nation to have suffered to reign or to live.*

* In a subsequent paper on *Cayley's Memoirs of Sir Thomas More*, Mr. Foster recurs to this subject, and dwells upon it with a beauty and force which strikingly exhibit the nice discrimination and sound moral sense by which his intellect was distinguished. The passage should be read in connexion with his remarks on the hilarity of Hume.

"Some grave and pious persons have been inclined to censure this gayety as incongruous with the feelings appropriate to the solemn situation. We would observe, that though we were to admit, as a general rule, that expressions of wit and pleasantry are unbecoming the last hour, yet Sir Thomas More may be justly considered as the exception. The constitution of his mind was so singular and so happy, that throughout his life his humour and wit were evidently, as a matter of fact, compatible, in almost all cases, with a general direction of his mind to serious and momentous subjects. His gayety did not imply a dereliction, even for the moment, of the habitude of mind proper to a wise and conscientious man. It was an unquestionable matter of fact, that he could emit pleasantries and be seriously weighing in his mind an important point of equity or law, and could pass directly from the play of wit to the acts and the genuine spirit of devotion. And if he could at all other times maintain a vigorous exercise of serious thought and devout sentiment, unhurt by the gleaming of these lambent fires, there was no good reason

Sir Thomas More's constant adherence to the church of Rome was evinced by his writing against the reformers in a strain of violence most uncongenial with his general character, by his superstitious discipline of a hair shirt and a knotted whip, by certain severities exercised on persons declaring against popery, by his expressing in the inscription which he wrote for his tomb his hostility to heretics, and by his deliberate preference of death to yielding any sanction to a measure by which the English monarch arrogated the ecclesiastical supremacy which had previously been acknowledged in the popes. In the earlier part of his life, however, he manifested a freedom of opinion which by no means threatened to grow into that bigotry, which in the latter part formed the only, but certainly very serious foil, to so much excellence. In his *Utopia* he made no scruple to censure the corruptions and ridicule the follies prevalent in the Roman church, and there can be no doubt that to a certain limited extent he would have zealously concurred in a plan of reform. Till the tumults attending the reformation excited him to wish that Christen-

why they might not gleam on the scaffold also. He had thousands of times before approached the Almighty, without finding, as he retired, that one of the faculties of his mind, one of the attributes of extraordinary and universal talent imparted to him by that Being, was become extinct in consequence of pious emotions : and his last addresses to that Being could not be of a specifically different nature from the former ; they could only be one degree more solemn. He had before almost habitually thought of death, and most impressively realized it ; and still he had wit, and its soft lustre was to his friends but the more delightful for gilding so grave a contemplation : well, he could only realize the awful event one degree more impressively, when he saw the apparatus, and was warned that this was the hour. As protestants, we undoubtedly feel some defect of complacency, in viewing such an admirable display of heroic self-possession mingled with so much error ; but we are convinced that he was devoutly obedient to what he believed the will of God, that the contemplation of the death of Christ was the cause of his intrepidity, and that the errors of his faith were not incompatible with his interest in that sacrifice.

"There is so little danger of any excessive indulgence of sallies of wit in the hour of death, that there is no need to discuss the question, how far as a rule applicable to good men in general, such vivacity, as that of More, would in that season comport with the Christian character ; but we are of opinion that it would fully comport, in any case substantially resembling his ; in any case where the innocent and refined play of wit had been through life one of the most natural and unaffected operations of the mind, where it had never been felt to prevent or injure serious thinking and pious feeling, and where it mingled with the clear indications of a real Christian magnanimity in death."

dom might be tranquillized by a paramount authority in religion, his veneration for the pope had by no means gone the length of ascribing an absolute unlimited authority in religious matters. At all times he held the decrees of general councils in higher respect than those of the papal court; and when Henry the Eighth was about to publish the famous book which procured him and all his successors the title of Defender of the Faith, More vainly remonstrated with him against the extravagant terms in which that book set forth the pope's authority.

He probably was not himself aware how firmly the popish superstitions had taken hold of his mind, till they were attacked by Luther; and then he found them become so sacred in his opinion, that he deliberately avowed, and with unquestionable sincerity, in his Apology, that he deemed heretics worse than robbers and murderers. And since his philosophy had fallen far short of admitting the principle that human authority has no right to punish modes of faith, he considered heretics as amenable to the tribunals of the state, and the magistrate bound to prosecute the enemies of God. The progress of his mind to bigotry and persecution is explained by Mr. Macdiarmid with much intelligence, and with the utmost candour toward the admirable person whom he is painfully forced to accuse.

It is impossible now to ascertain how far More was practically a persecutor. If it were possible, we should go into the inquiry with a strong apprehension of finding, that he did in some measure contribute to the rigorous execution of the laws enacted, or brought into more decisive operation, against the protestants, during part of the detestable reign in which it was his fate to live. It is unquestionable however that some of the protestant writers have greatly exceeded the truth, in charging him with numerous acts of direct personal cruelty in the exercise of his power. They have used expressions from which it might almost be inferred, that one of his ordinary methods against protestants was the infliction of corporal suffering. But we have his own express affirmation, which we consider as of higher authority than all other testimony, that he had recourse to personal violence on account of the declared renunciation of popery only in two instances, that of a boy of his household, and that of a man who was guilty of indecent outrages on persons, particularly on women, attend-

ing the mass. These two he caused to be "stripped," he says, but not so much, he affirms, as to cause them any lasting pain or injury. Without however proceeding the odious length that has been most unjustly imputed to him, he might, in his high official capacity of chancellor and president of the star-chamber, exercise much legal intolerance; and from such a view we can only join with all good and wise men in lamenting the deplorable darkness and perversity of human reason, which both in that and later times so obstinately refused to perceive or acknowledge, that religious opinions are entirely beyond the jurisdiction of human authority. What is most humiliating of all,—many of the reformers themselves, though asserting liberty of opinion in their dissent from the church of Rome, could not comprehend that other men had the very same right to dissent from *them*. The larger portion of the history of the reformed churches has been the history of popish intolerance, variously modified indeed, in its action, by national and local character, and by the particular temper of leading individuals, but well furnished with its conclaves, its holy offices, its political intrigues, its bulls, its dungeons, and even its executioners, and operating rather on a reduced scale of power, than with any mitigation of malignity. All this, say the protestants, is very arrogant and impious in the papal church; but the papal church is *erroneous*, and the papal church is not *ours*:—of what inestimable utility, in the *true* church, would be a modified exercise of that high authority, which is indeed so wrong and pernicious in the corrupt one; it were very unfortunate to lose entirely so grand an advantage gained over the human mind by ecclesiastical authority; certainly it has been very improperly acquired and used by the church that gained it, but *being* gained, might it not become a holy thing in the hands of holy men? The conqueror was no doubt guilty of ambition and injustice, but his successors, who are of course wise and beneficent, may do much more good by retaining the subjugated provinces and the spoils, than by restoring liberty and property. Can the power be too great, when the only object to which it is possible for it ever to be applied in *our* hands is the support of the genuine cause of God? When strong measures have been employed to promote and establish error, are we not in duty called upon to use means equally strong to maintain the truth? Sentiments of this kind are unhappily felt and expressed by bigots, not

only in all establishments, but in all sects, however manifestly incompatible with their primary and fundamental principles.

As long as the popish establishment stands, it will have the effect, not only of setting an example, venerable by age, of ecclesiastical dominion, but of continually suggesting how far it *might* be carried; and it will tend to prevent any set of men from ever suspecting themselves of intolerance, so long as they stop short of the downright tyranny which that church has always practised, and prevent them from cordially allowing an absolute freedom of thought and profession, satisfied with just so much authority over men's religious opinions as argument, eloquence, and virtue can maintain. On account of this influence, as well as of the immediate noxiousness of the papal dominion wherever it exists, we have fervently to wish for the downfall of all its establishments, and humbly to pray, that the movements of the present awful crisis may happily be made so far beneficial as to result in their final demolition. We come back to the book before us by observing, that the detestable quality of religious, and especially popish bigotry, is hardly more conspicuous in the exhibitions of Smithfield and St. Bartholomew, than in the fact of its having sometimes filled with virulence such an otherwise almost angelic being as Sir Thomas More.

We must be more brief in our notice of the remaining lives. That of Cecil, Lord Burleigh, presents to our view beyond all doubt the most useful minister that ever managed the affairs of our country. He held the important station during very nearly the whole reign of Elizabeth; and we shall not allow it to constitute any impeachment of either our loyalty or gallantry, that we have wished, while reading the account of his life, that he had been the monarch instead of our famous queen. It is impossible to say what share of the better part of her fame was owing to him, but we are inclined to think, that if we could make out an estimate of that reign, wanting all the good which resulted from just so much wisdom and moderation as Cecil possessed beyond any other statesman that could have been employed, and including all the evil which no other minister would have prevented, we should rifle that splendid period of more than half its honours. A very considerable proportion of his political labour was a contest with his sovereign, a contest with caprice, with superstition,

with bigotry, and with the prodigality of favouritism. This would no doubt reflect great honour on the sovereign who could, notwithstanding, retain in her favour and service so upright a minister, if the fact had not been, that his services were just as indispensable to her government as those of a cook or postillion were to her personal accommodation. She had the sense to be convinced, and the prudence to act on her conviction, that no other man in her dominions could so happily direct her affairs through the extreme dangers of that memorable period. Though, therefore, she would sometimes treat him with the meanest injustice, contriving to throw on him the odium of any dishonourable or unpopular action of her own, and would occasionally make him the object, like the rest of her ministers, of her abusive petulance, addressing him with the titles of "old fool," "miscreant," and "coward," yet she made him always her most confidential counsellor, zealously defended him against his enemies, refused his urgent solicitation, when advanced far in life, to be allowed to retire from his office, and anxiously visited his sick room in the concluding period of his life, and not remote from the close of her own.

Excepting one or two sublime examples in the Jewish history, Sir Thomas More was probably the only great statesman that ever rose to eminence and power without ambition. Though Cecil's virtue could descend to no base expedients for advancement, he was from his early youth of a very aspiring disposition; and certainly, if the most extraordinary industry and attainments could merit distinction and honourable employment, no young man ever had superior claims. He very soon drew the attention of the court, obtained the utmost that his ambition could desire, and held a ministerial office probably a greater number of years than any other man in our history. With the exception of a very few objectionable or doubtful circumstances, it seems impossible to use language too strong in praise of this admirable minister. No statesman since his time has given the nation, after long experience of his conduct, such a profound complacent feeling of being safe. The idea which gradually came to be entertained of him was almost that of a being not needing sleep or recreation, always active by an invincible necessity, not subject to any caprices of temper nor obscurations of understanding, created and endowed to live for the state and for no other pur-

pose, and so far above all meanness of self-interest as to make it not at all worth while to examine his conduct; and after being minister several times ten years, he seemed, in the apprehension of the people, to have outlived any danger of being removed from his office by death. If any unexpected public event happened, in England or the surrounding countries, it was felt to be certain that the faithful old sentinel would be the first to see it, and would descry and avert any danger it might involve. If parties threatened to run high, it was recollected that Cecil's discernment and impartiality would calmly judge and balance their respective principles and merits, and that his incomparable powers of conciliation had already quieted or moderated many a political war. If a new man was raised to some important station, it was well-known that Cecil, in his appointments and recommendations, trampled on all pretensions but those of personal qualification. If the queen's favourites were given to wild courses, and seemed to endanger the sobriety of her government, it was not doubted that Cecil would keep a vigilant eye on their proceedings, and would dare, if it should become necessary, even to admonish her Majesty on the subject. If a tax was imposed, it was relied on that the careful and frugal minister would not have sanctioned it without an indispensable necessity. If a negotiation was carried on with foreign states, it was quite a certain thing that Cecil would neither provoke them nor cringe to them, would sacrifice no national advantage either through pride or meanness. And if a military expedition was to be equipped, it was not a matter to be doubted that some just and important object was to be gained, at the smallest possible hazard and expense. Such a man was of necessity violently hated by every party and every individual, in constant succession, that had any mean projects of self-interest to prosecute at the expense of the public welfare; but the bulk of the nation must have wished centuries of life, if it had been possible, to the incomparable minister. The character of his understanding was that of vast comprehension, which could view the most complicated system of concerns in all its parts, and in due proportion, at once; and therefore saw how to promote the advantage of the whole by the expedients devised for any particular part. The character of his political temper, if we may so express it, was a vigorous moderation, prompt and resolute in its measures,

and yet seeking to accomplish the end by the most temperate means and in the quietest manner. Moderation was conspicuous in the general scope and direction of his designs, as well as in the manner of effecting each particular object. He was the invariable opponent of war, which he, unaccountably, judged an expedient very rarely necessary even in the most turbulent times, and of which he most perfectly beheld the vile and hideous features through the romantic dazzling kind of heroism so much in vogue in those enterprising times. But the greatest and most continued efforts of his moderate policy were made in the endeavour to preserve to the people some slight shadow of religious liberty, in opposition to the half-popish queen, and a most bigoted and persecuting hierarchy, that incessantly counteracted his liberal schemes.

The boasted reign of Elizabeth was a period of great barbarism, as far as related to the royal and episcopal notions of the rights of conscience, and of great cruelty in the practical administration of the religious department. Cecil remonstrated in a spirited manner against the proceedings of the prelates, which he charged with being nearly the same as those of the Inquisition; but when he attempted to interpose his official authority in defence of the victims of their intolerance, he found they had so entirely the approbation of the queen, that they would set his remonstrances and interposition at defiance. She was a bigoted devotee to various popish superstitions, was passionately fond of gaudy and childish ceremonials in the ecclesiastical institutions, was the bitter enemy of every thing like real liberty of religious opinion, and, in short, was altogether unworthy of being, where circumstances had placed her, at the head of the protestant cause. The accident of her being placed in this distinguished situation, and being consequently hated and conspired against by all the catholic governments, was the grand security for the animated loyalty of her protestant subjects; and even the puritans, towards whom the measures of her reign symbolized a good deal with the plagues of Egypt, were so desperate of any other defence against the horrors of a real popish dominion and persecution, that they entered into associations for the protection of her person and government. Their loyalty, therefore, was obviously in a great degree self-interested; but the following passage, among very many others of a similar kind that might

be extracted, will tend to show that it was also in no small degree generous and gratuitous. Away then with the charge of faction and turbulence which has been made against this venerable class of sufferers, unless the charge of faction is also to be applied to the principle of returning good for evil.

“Elizabeth holding very different sentiments from these, not only prescribed peculiar forms for the worship of her people, but was determined that they should use no other. The puritans, on the other hand, without calling her right in question, objected to the forms which she had appointed, because they had been previously employed in the popish worship, as mystical symbols, and were associated in the minds of the people with the grossest superstitions. They resolved therefore that no worldly considerations should induce them to assume what they accounted appendages of idolatry: while the queen, on her part, prepared to employ all her authority in support of this exertion of her supremacy.

“Finding that her council, the ablest and wisest council that England ever saw, were decidedly averse to measures which threatened to involve the nation in the most dangerous dissensions, she resolved to effect her purpose by means of the bishops, particularly Archbishop Parker, who readily and zealously entered into her views. The severities to which these now proceeded, were only surpassed by the frivolity of the pretences under which they were exercised. While the fervent attachment to the use of surplices, corner-caps, tippets, the cross in baptism, and the ring in marriage, were considered as the distinguishing characteristics of a Christian, any dislike to these forms, which were allowed to be in themselves indifferent, was accounted a sufficient crime to subject the most learned and pious clergyman to imprisonment and exile; or, as a mitigated punishment, to be turned out of his living, and with his family consigned to indigence. The most pernicious effects necessarily flowed from these excesses. While the church was weakened by the loss of a large portion of her most able divines, and degraded by the introduction of a great number of men who could barely read the prayer-book, and write their own names, without even pretending to preach, the people began every where to collect round their expelled teachers, and to form conventicles apart from the establishment. Yet these bad consequences only set the queen and her bishops upon obtaining new statutes to reach the refractory; and at length, even the laity were brought within their grasp, by an act which provided that non-attendance at public worship, in the parish churches, should be punished with imprisonment, banishment, and if the exile returned, with death. An arbitrary commission was appointed with full powers to bring all religious offenders to punishment; and as any resistance to the injunctions of the queen, as supreme head of the church, was at length construed into sedition and treason, many subjects, of unquestioned loyalty, were imprisoned, banished, and even executed.”—P. 156.

There could be no hazard in affirming, that a man combining greater industry with greater powers of execution, never

lived since the beginning of time. And when it is considered through what a very long period these exertions were maintained, and that for the most part they were most judiciously directed to the public good, we may be allowed to dwell with high complacency on this great character, notwithstanding the censure which we think justly due to the magnificence of his private establishment, and the reprobation deserved by one or two iniquitous modes of taxation which he suggested to Elizabeth. And though it was certainly very unnecessary, except to his ambition, for him to occupy so vastly wide a sphere of official employment, and it might have been more truly patriotic to have endeavoured to introduce other men of merit into some of the departments, both in order to give them a share of the deserved distinction, and to qualify them to serve the nation after death should have closed his own labours, yet we would earnestly press this wonderful example of industry, as a pattern and a monition, on the consciences of many worthy people, who may applaud themselves for having passed a busy week, in virtue of about so much real application as would have been compressed into less than half a day of our indefatigable statesman.

Notwithstanding the rigorous occupation of his time and faculties by the business of the government, we are informed that he could lay aside all the formality of the statesman, in the company of his select friends, and in amusing himself with his children and grandchildren.—We are gratified by all the indications that religion had a habitual influence on his mind; and his maxim, given in the first sentence of the following quotation, will furnish the most dignified explanation of the principle which secured the general rectitude of his own useful and admirable life.

“It was usual with him to say that he would never trust any man but of sound religion, for he that was false to God would never be true to man. From his speeches and discourses we are led to conclude, that his religious sentiments had a powerful effect in confirming his fortitude, amidst the perilous circumstances with which he was often surrounded. At the awful period when Philip was preparing his Armada, and when the utter destruction of the English government was confidently expected abroad, and greatly dreaded at home, Burleigh appeared uniformly collected and resolute; and when the mighty preparations of the Spaniards were spoken of in his presence with apprehension, he only replied with firmness, ‘They shall do no more than God will suffer them.’ The strictness of his morals corresponded with his religious professions; nor could his enemies, who

severely scrutinized his most indifferent actions, impute to him even the vices peculiarly incident to his rank."—P. 245.

Devout references to the Deity might not be of ordinary occurrence among ministers of state of that day; the more extensive prevalence of sincere piety among the great, in the present times, must be the cause that we now so very frequently hear our statesmen, in adverting to dangers of similar kind, utter with true devotional solemnity such reflections as that expressed by Cecil on occasion of the Armada.

The next life is that of Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and it is the longest and most important of the series. It is evidently the result of severe thought, and very diligent research; and to us it appears to be written with the utmost impartiality that is possible to any man who really holds certain decided principles relative to the right and wrong of governments. We can perceive in the writer no trace of the demagogue or partisan; the amplest justice is done to the talents of the distinguished person, and in several points his conduct is liberally applauded for integrity; while the very fair advantage is given him throughout of being his own evidence and advocate, as his letters and dispatches are taken as the principal authority. This life is a most interesting piece of composition, in which the account of an extraordinary individual is very dexterously managed to combine and animate various general sketches of the affairs of the most memorable period of our history. The narration of Strafford's active political career, which commenced early in his life, is preceded by a rapid but very able and luminous statement of the contest which had been zealously maintained, through several ages, between the respective claims of the monarch and the people; which great contest, as he clearly shows, was precipitated very fast toward a decision, at the period when Strafford entered on the public stage. The preceding sovereigns, and by no means less than the rest, James's immediate predecessor, had held a very magnificent language on the subject of the royal power and prerogatives; but Elizabeth took care to avoid the necessity of bringing the obnoxious question to issue in the most dangerous form of large demands of money. Her extreme economy in the public expenditure, her admired talents, the unequalled policy of her great minister, her being the chief of

the protestant cause, and the influence which her sex maintained on the chivalrous part of the nation, had all concurred to secure for her a tolerance of the arrogant pretensions which she so prudently forbore to follow up into a complete practical assertion. It was not within the capacity of James to understand, that the nation must be greatly transformed if it could endure the same language, even though combined with the same practical forbearance, from a stranger, of the slenderest endowments, of prodigal and low habits, suspected of popery, and governed by such a favourite as the infamous Buckingham. But he was resolved that they should not only hear the loftiest strains of the *jus divinum*, but should be made to acquiesce in all the modes of verifying it on their purses, their creeds, and their persons. He was indeed compelled to observe the popular formality of calling parliaments; but he revenged himself by stout though laconic lectures to them on passive obedience, by insults, by declarations of their futility, by peremptory demands of money, and by petulant orders of dissolution. This was the state of things at the time that Strafford, a young gentleman of large fortune, of very high spirit, of powerful talents, and by no means devoid of all good qualities, entered into parliament; and it required but a short time to make him very prominent among the leaders of the popular cause, to the support of which none of his contemporaries brought more courage, or more eloquence. He entered so fully into the arguments of this cause, as to deprive himself, if he should desert it, of all apology on the ground of juvenile rashness and inconsideration. It was of course not long before so formidable an opponent received overtures from Buckingham, in behalf of himself and the court which he ruled. What surprise would be felt by any reader who should not have lived long enough to know how these matters regularly go, to find that these overtures were received and replied to with the greatest possible politeness by Strafford, though he had a thousand times, within a few preceding months, pronounced the man by whom they were made to be the greatest miscreant in Europe, and to be intent on such designs as every man of virtue ought to oppose, even to the hazard of his life! He instantly placed himself in the attitude of patient waiting, and in part payment of the price of the good things he was going to receive, began, in parliament, to endeavour to *moderate* the tone of the popular party; though most zealous for their great

cause, he was anxious they should not prosecute it in the spirit and language of *faction*. Our benevolent sympathy was extremely hurt to find, that this virtuous patriot was deceived and insulted by Buckingham, who, on second thoughts, had determined to do without him. It then became proper to discover again, that no energy of opposition in parliament could be too vehement against the designs of the favourite and the king.

That king was Charles the First, who having made a long and very strenuous effort to subdue the people and the parliament to his arbitrary government by authority and intimidation, was induced again to try the expedient of converting some of the boldest of the refractory into friends by means of honours and emoluments. He was instantly successful with Strafford, who accepted a peerage, and the presidency of the Council of York; and became and continued to the end of his life, the most faithful and devoted servant of the king, and of his despotic system of government. He might seem to have felt an almost enthusiastic passion for despotism in the abstract, independently of any partiality for the particular person who was to exercise it. After a few years of his administration as viceroy of Ireland, he exulted to declare, that in that country the king was as absolute as any monarch in the whole world. And when, after the very long series of struggles between Charles and the people, the question was coming rapidly to the last fatal arbitrement, he urged the king to the prompt adoption of the most vigorous and decisive measures; and he was mortified almost to distraction when he saw him, notwithstanding this energetic advice, falling into a wavering and timid policy. His own character and measures, indeed, had always been distinguished by an extraordinary and almost preternatural vigour. His energy and fortitude did not desert him, even when at length he found himself falling under the power and vengeance of that irresistible popular spirit which embodied its determined force and hostility in the long parliament, aided, with respect to Strafford, by the hatred and court influence of the queen. He maintained the most graceful and dignified firmness on the scaffold; to which he was consigned in the result of the most memorable trial, except that of his royal master, in the records of our history; a trial in which a perversion of law was made the expedient for accomplishing what was deemed a point of moral justice not formally provided for by the law.

As in all such cases, the bad effects became conspicuous, as Mr. Macdiarmid observes, in the admiration which the heroic sufferer excited in his death ; whereas, if he had only been doomed, as he did well deserve, and would have been felt to deserve, to perpetual imprisonment or exile, his name and character would have sunk down quietly to their proper level, and he would simply have been recollected as one of the many able unprincipled men, who have chosen to identify their fame with that of the despots of whom they have consented to be the tools.

VII.

L O R D K A M E S .

Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Hon. Henry Home, of Kame; containing Sketches of the Progress of Literature and general Improvement in Scotland, during the greater part of the Eighteenth Century.

THE principal facts relative to the individual who forms the leading subject of this work, may be given in a few words. Henry Home was the son of a country gentleman of small fortune, and was born in the year 1696. About the age of sixteen, he was bound by indenture to attend the office of a writer to the signet in Edinburgh, with a view to prepare himself for the profession of a solicitor. Being sent one evening by his master with some papers to the President of the Court of Session, he was so handsomely treated by the venerable judge and his daughter, and so enchanted with the character of dignity and elegance in their manners and situation, that he was instantly fired with the ambition of attaining eminence in the public profession of the law, and resolved to qualify himself for an advocate. He commenced a most laborious course of study, as well in the departments of literature and science, as in the knowledge more peculiarly appropriate to his intended profession, and made a rapid progress in them all. He was called to the bar at the age of twenty-seven, published various writings on legal subjects, obtained at length the first eminence as a pleader, and was appointed at the age of fifty-six one of the judges of the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Kames. His moral and metaphysical studies were prosecuted with as much ardour as those of the law; he was personally acquainted with most of the philosophers of the time; and by means of his writings became celebrated as a philosopher himself. When he was near the age of seventy, his fortune received the addition of a very large estate, left to his wife, to whom he had

been married at the age of forty-five : this estate he was almost enthusiastically fond of cultivating and adorning. About the same period that he obtained this wealth, his legal rank was raised to that of a Lord of Justiciary, a judge of the supreme criminal tribunal in Scotland, of which office he continued to discharge the duties till his death, in 1782, in the eighty-seventh year of his age.

Lord Kames was a very conspicuous man in his time, and deserved to pass down to posterity in a record of considerable length. He has rendered a material service to literature by his "*Elements of Criticism*;" and from the work before us it is evident, that his professional studies contributed the most important advantages to both the theory and the administration of law in Scotland. The improvement in agriculture also, in that country, seems to have taken its rise, in a great measure, from his zeal and his example. He received from nature an extraordinary activity of mind, to which his multiplied occupations allowed no remission, even in his advanced age; we find him as indefatigable in his eightieth year, as in the most vigorous and ambitious season of his life. The versatility of his talents was accompanied by a strength and acuteness, which penetrated to the essence of the subjects to which they were applied. The intentions with which he prosecuted such a wide diversity of studies, appear often excellent; very few men so ingenious, so speculative, so systematic, and occasionally so fanciful, have kept practical utility so generally in view. The great influence which he exerted over some of the younger philosophers of the time, several of the most distinguished of whom were proud to acknowledge themselves his pupils, was employed to determine their speculations to useful purposes. His conduct in the office of judge appears to have impressed every impartial man that witnessed it, with an invariable opinion of his talents and integrity. As a domestic and social man, his character was that of frankness, good humour, and extreme vivacity. His prompt intelligence continually played around him, and threw its rays on every subject that even casualty could introduce into conversation. His defects as a speculatist were, that he had not, like the very first order of minds, that simplicity of intellect that operates rather in the form of power than of ingenuity, and is too strong to be either captivated or amused by the specious fallacies of a fantastic theory; and that, as far as we have the means of judging, he had a higher respect for

the conjectures of mere reason, than for the authority of revelation.

The name of Lord Kames is sufficiently eminent to render an account of his life interesting, though it appear more than twenty years after his death. But we greatly admire the modesty with which Lord Woodhouselee, better known to the literary world under the name of Mr. Fraser Tytler, has been waiting, during this extended interval, for some abler hand to execute a work, to which he, very unaccountably, professes himself inadequate. This long delay, however, has been of immense service to the magnitude of the performance, which has perhaps been growing many years, and has risen and expanded at length, into a most ample shade of cypress over the tomb of Lord Kames.

In order to give the book this prodigious size, the author has chosen to take advantage of Lord Kames's diversified studies, to enlarge on the several subjects of those studies ; of his profession of law, to deduce the history of Scottish law, and of the lives of its most distinguished professors and practitioners, accompanied by dissertations on law in general ; and of his happening to be a Scotchman, to go back as far as the tenth century in order to prove that there were scholars then in Scotland, and return all the way downward, proving that there have been scholars there ever since. In his youth Lord Kames was acquainted with a particular species of beaux, peculiar to those times, which animals had, if our author is to be believed, a singular faculty of uniting the two functions of fluttering and thinking ; and therefore several individuals are to be separately described, (vol. i. p. 57, &c.) It was extremely proper to give us a short account of the species, as forming a curious branch of entomology ; but it does not seem to have been so indispensable to describe, individually, beau Forrester and beau Hamilton. Because one of Lord Kames's early friends, a Mr. Oswald, was a member of parliament, a sheet and a half must be occupied by uninteresting letters, which this Mr. Oswald wrote to him about temporary and party politics. A larger space is filled with letters from Dean Tucker, which, excepting one, and perhaps two or three paragraphs of another, are not of the smallest consequence, further than their being written to Lord Kames ; but therefore they are inserted. Lord Kames was acquainted with David Hume, and, therefore, in his life, there must be a very long account of the publication and reception

of "Hume's Treatise of Human Nature," with a very long extract from its conclusion. Lord Kames wrote a well known book called the "Elements of Criticism," and therefore actually fifteen pages at once are filled with an extract from that book. We have taken all due pains, but ineffectually, to reconcile ourselves to this mode of enlarging the size of a book by uninteresting letters, and indolent extracts. But even if a large work were constructed without this lazy expedient, and consisted almost wholly of the honest workmanship of the author, we have still an invincible dislike to the practice of pouring forth the miscellaneous stores of a common-place book, of relating the literary, the legal, the philosophical, and the political transactions of half a century, and of expending narrative and panegyric to a vast amount on a crowd of all sorts of people, under the form and pretence of recording the life of an individual. It is an obvious charge against this species of writing, that it can have no assignable limits, for as the object is undefinable, we can never be certain that it is gained; and therefore the writer may go on adding volume to volume, still pretending that all this is necessary to his plan, till his whole stock of miscellaneous materials is exhausted; and then he may tell us with a critical air of knowing what he is about, that he has executed, however imperfectly, the plan which he had considered as best adapted for doing justice to the interesting subject. But if instead of this he were to tell us, (perhaps on having found another drawer-full of materials) that another volume was necessary for giving right proportions and a right conclusion to his work, we could not contradict him, because we should not know where to seek for the rules or principles by which to decide *what* would be a proper form or termination; unless we were to refer the case to be settled by our patience, or our purse, according to which authorities in criticism, we may possibly have passed, a good way back, the chapter or paragraph, which appeared very proper for a conclusion. Every work ought to have so far a specific object, that we can form some notion what materials are properly or improperly introduced, and within what compass the whole should be contained. Those works that disdain to recognise any standard of prescription according to which books are appointed to be made, may fairly be regarded as outlaws of literature, which every prowling reviewer has a right to fall upon wherever he finds them.

Another serious objection against this practice of making a

great book of a mass of materials so diverse that they have no natural connexion, and in such quantity that the slender narrative of an individual's life is insufficient to form an artificial connexion, is, that it is extremely injurious to the good order of our intellectual arrangements ; as it accustoms the reader to that broken, immethodical, and discursive manner of thought which is preventive or destructive of the power both of prolonged attention and continuous reasoning. Just when a man has resolved, and possibly begun, to put his mind under severe discipline, in order to cure its rambling propensities, when he has perhaps vowed to do penance in mathematics for his mental dissipation, he is met by one meretricious pair of volumes after another, presenting all the seducing attractions of novelty, variety, facility of perusal, amusement somewhat dignified by an admixture of grave sense, and all this in an attire of the utmost elegance, from the type to the outside covering. The unfortunate sinner renounces his vows, throws away his mathematics, and becomes as abandoned a literary libertine as ever. If it be said, that a book thus composed merits, at the most, no more serious accusation than merely that of its being a miscellany, and that we have many miscellanies and collectanea which are well received by the public as a legitimate class of books ; we answer, yes, we have miscellanies and collectanea without number, and they are a pest of literature ; they reduce our reading to a useless amusement, and promote a vicious taste that nauseates the kind of reading, which alone can supply well-ordered knowledge, and assist the attainment of a severe and comprehensive judgment. These heterogeneous productions drive away the regular *treatises*, the best auxiliaries of mental discipline, from the tables of both our male and female readers ; and the volumes of our Lockes, and Hartleys, and Reids, are reduced to become a kind of fortifying wall to the territory of spiders, on the remotest and dustiest shelf in all the room.

Against an assemblage of multifarious biography of distinguished men, under the ostensible form of a record of the life of an individual, we have to observe that it has the fallacious effect of making that individual appear as always the king of the whole tribe. This would not be the effect, if merely so much were mentioned, concerning other eminent persons, as should be indispensable to the history of the one immediately in question. These short references might just give us an impression of the high rank of those other persons,

and induce us to seek in the proper quarter for more ample information concerning them: they would be brought into no comparison with the person whose life is exclusively to be related. But when so much is said of them, that we seem to have a competent memoir of each, so that we do not want to inquire any further, and when yet all these memoirs together do not occupy so large a space as that filled by the chief personage, this individual comes to hold in our thoughts a magnitude superior to that of the rest, nearly in proportion to the ampler space he fills in the book. There is enough to bring them into comparison with him, and too little to illustrate and support their claims in that comparison; and they seem but assembled as bashaws round their Grand Turk. In the work before us, Lord Kames appears, (for we have been at pains, with the help of Erasmus, *De copia verborum et rerum*, to find a nobler simile than the last) like Jupiter on the top of the Scottish Olympus, looking kindly, though majestically, down, on the inferior personages of the worshipful assembly, such as Hume, Reid, Adam Smith, Millar, and many others. Lord Woodhouselee does not expressly *proclaim* the superiority, and perhaps no more did Mercury or Ganymedes; it is enough that Jupiter did, and that Lord Kames does, Sit on the most spacious throne. But then let us turn to the historian and eulogist of some other member of that great philosophic hierarchy, and the venerable order is strangely confounded and revolutionized; Dr. Adam Smith, for instance, places David Hume on the proudest eminence, and Kames, and all the rest of them, are made to know their places. This game of shifting dignities, this transferring of regal honours, must continue, till each panegyrist shall have the discretion to confine his work so much to an individual, as to avoid the invidiousness of constantly, in effect, running a parallel between him and his contemporaries.

We also object to the telling, in the life of one man, of so much about the life, and works, and actions of another, because if the life of that other is likewise to be written, the biographer of the former actually forestalls or pilfers the materials which are wanted by the biographer of the latter. And thus the same thing is told twice, or, if but once, it is told in the wrong place. But it is certain to be told twice, for the trade of mutual borrowing, and mutual stealing, never thrives better than among the biographers of the present day.

In reading this, and some late voluminous works, purport-

ing to be the lives of particular persons, and in observing the multitude of memoirs of other persons appended or interwoven, we have earnestly wished, that each country, and especially North Britain, had been a good while since provided with a standard approved dictionary of all its names of any consequence; with a sufficient quantity of information under each, and with a concise supplement regularly added every few years. In that case, the writer of a particular and eminently distinguished life, would not have needed, and could have had no pretext, to swell the bulk of his work with an account of every person, of the smallest note, whom he had occasion to mention, as contemporary, or in any manner connected, with the principal person, or even as having preceded him by years or centuries. We might then be referred, in one line, to the article in the dictionary, to be consulted at leisure, and go on, without circuit or interruption, with the main subject. We still wish this were done, with the utmost haste; since we do not know how many more ponderous and costly works, like the present, may else come out, loaded with secondary subjects, and even with the substance of some of the very same articles which have encumbered this and recent publications. For making such a dictionary, it will be of service to consult these works of which we have complained, and extract from them several articles relating to persons of whom, though deserving of some notice, no information, as it should seem, may be found anywhere else. There is, for instance, in the book before us, a particular account of an obscure, but apparently an able man, of the name of Colin Maclaurin. It was a disappointment to us not to see this followed by some account of Maclaurin's master, another obscure man of the name of Newton.

Having thus honestly protested against this mode of raising a large and costly book by collecting a heap of heterogeneous materials, and having informed our readers that the life of Lord Kames, though very long and busy, forms but a rather slight and arbitrary combination of the contents of these volumes, we must now express our opinion of the merit of those contents separately considered; and produce some extracts illustrative of their quality. And we are prompt to testify, that in many instances their quality is high. Lord Woodhouselee is an able and practised thinker, possessed of ample stores of learning and general knowledge, well acquainted

with the history, the schools, and the questions of philosophy ; a discriminative judge of character ; and writing in a style, which we deem a finished example of what may be called transparent diction. It is so singularly lucid, so free from all affected rhetoric and artificial turns of phrase, so perfectly abstracted, with the exception of a law term or two, from every dialect appropriated to a particular subject, that we have never viewed thoughts through a purer medium. It is so pure and perfect, that we can read on, a considerable way, without our attention being arrested by the medium ; it is as if there were nothing, if we may so express ourselves, between us and the thought. And we are made to think of the medium after some time, only by the reflection how very clearly we have apprehended the sense, even when relating to the uncouth subjects of law, or the abstruse subjects of metaphysics. By this pure and graceful diction, we are beguiled along with the author, through several prolix and unnecessary details, without being indignant, till we are past them, that he should have occupied himself and us with things too inconsiderable to deserve a fifth part of the space they fill.

We have been greatly pleased and instructed by many of the reasonings on topics of philosophy, law, and criticism, the result of mature and comprehensive thought, and but very little tinctured by the peculiarities of any sect or school, though somewhat partial, of course, to the opinions of Lord Kames, who, in spite of the immense disparity of age, was the intimate friend of the author's younger years. Many of his observations and statements, elucidate the history and progress of law, science, and literature in Scotland. We have only to regret, that he had not elaborated his thoughts on these various subjects into a digested series of finished essays, instead of throwing them together in a mass, to swell beyond all reasonable bounds the importance of an individual. A great part of this matter might just as well have been appended to the life of any one of half a dozen other of the Scottish philosophers of the last century ; a proof of the impropriety of its being all incorporated with the history of one.

As to the letters to Lord Kames, which constitute a material portion of the work, we have already said, that many of them ought to have been omitted. But a considerable number are highly distinguished by sense or ingenuity ; we refer to

several from Dr. Franklin, many from Mrs. Montague, one from Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, on courts of equity, one or two from David Hume, and a few long ones, of great value, from Professor Walker and Dr. Reid. The very long and intimate friendship with this last eminent philosopher, continued to the death of Lord Kames. Their characters are thus amusingly contrasted by Mr. Dugald Stewart :

“ With one very distinguished character, the late Lord Kames, he (Dr. Reid) lived in the most cordial and affectionate friendship, notwithstanding the avowed opposition of their sentiments on some moral questions to which he attached the greatest importance. Both of them, however, were the friends of virtue and of mankind ; and both were able to temper the warmth of free discussion with the forbearance and good humour founded on mutual esteem. No two men, certainly, ever exhibited a more striking contrast in their conversation, or in their constitutional tempers : the one slow and cautious in his decisions, even on those topics which he had most diligently studied ; reserved and silent in promiscuous society ; and retaining, after all his literary eminence, the same simple and unassuming manners which he brought from his country residence : the other lively, rapid, and communicative ; accustomed by his professional pursuits, to wield with address the weapons of controversy, and not averse to a trial of his powers on questions the most foreign to his ordinary habits of inquiry. But these characteristical differences, while to their common friends, they lent an additional charm to the distinguishing merits of each, served *only* to enliven their social intercourse, and to cement their mutual attachment.”—Vol. II. p. 230.

Their correspondence, and no doubt their conversations, were directed very much to the most abstruse questions of physical and metaphysical science. Indeed, we deem it honourable to Lord Kames, that most of his friendships appear to have been as laborious as they were sincere. The whole quantity of intellectual faculty existing among his friends was put in permanent requisition. And when he at any time heard of strong minds among his contemporaries, beyond the circle of his acquaintance, it was not long before he was devising how to trepan them, as elephants are caught in the east, in order to make them work. He had all kinds of burdens ready for them, and no burden so light, that any of them could frisk and gambol under it, in the wantonness of superfluous strength. It was at their peril, that any of them showed signs of thinking little of the difficulty of a discussion in law or criticism ; they were sure to have a whole system of metaphysics laid on their backs at the next turn. Very early in life he commenced this plan, and thought himself on the point of catching one of the stoutest of the elephantine

race. Dr. Clarke had some years before published his celebrated *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*. Mr. Home, at the age of twenty-seven, wrote him a long letter, proposing objections, and demanding new arguments and solutions. Its unceremonious and almost presumptuous style, however, evinced a want of skill as yet in his inveigling art; the device was too coarsely adjusted to trepan one of the most discerning of the giant species; who just stopped a few minutes in passing, tossed about with his trunk, as if in scorn of the design, some of the piles of materials with which it had been intended to load him, and then moved quietly off into the forest.—In simple language, Dr. Clarke wrote him a short, civil, and argumentative letter, and the correspondence went no further.

Lord Kames had always a very strong partiality to metaphysical studies; and he evinced even in that letter to Dr. Samuel Clarke, which we have already noticed with disapprobation of its spirit, an acuteness adapted to excel in abstract speculations. In first introducing him in the character of a philosopher, Lord Woodhouselee takes occasion to make some observations on the tendency and value of metaphysical researches.

“Allowing them to be conversant about the noblest part of our frame, the nature and powers of the human soul; and granting that they give the most vigorous exercise to the understanding, by training the mind to an earnest and patient attention to its own operations; still I fear it must be admitted, that as those abstract studies are beyond the limits of the faculties of the bulk of mankind, no conclusion thence derived can have much influence on human conduct. Even the anxiety shown by metaphysical writers to apologize for their favourite pursuits, by endeavouring, with great ingenuity, to deduce from them a few practical consequences with respect to life and manners, is strong proof of the native infertility of the soil, on which so much labour is bestowed to produce so small a return. It is not much to the praise of this science, that the most subtle and ingenious spirits have, for above two thousand years, assiduously exercised themselves in its various subjects of discussion, and have not yet arrived at a set of fundamental principles on which the thinking world is agreed. Neither have the uses, to which this sort of reasoning has sometimes been applied, tended to enhance its estimation. The attempts that have been made to found morality on metaphysical principles, have for certain been prejudicial, on the whole, to the cause of virtue. The acutest of the sceptical writers, availing themselves of Mr. Locke’s doctrine of the origin of ideas, and the consequences he has thence drawn respecting morals, have done much more harm by weakening our belief in the reality of moral distinctions, than the ablest of their opponents, combating them on the same ground, and with the same weapons, have found it possible to

repair. The baneful industry of the former has, it is true, made the labours of the latter in some degree necessary, and therefore useful ; and it is in this point of view that the writings of those metaphysicians, who are antagonists of the sceptical philosophy, are entitled to attention and to praise."—Vol. I. p. 21.

Such observations are of much weight as coming from a person so well versed in metaphysics. But it will be impossible for the reader of these volumes to believe the author can mean to be very rigid in proscribing metaphysical study, to which we can perceive that his clear understanding is in no small degree indebted. Nor will any enlightened man, we think, condemn, without great qualification, what is evidently the sublimest class of speculations, what demands the strongest mental powers, and their severest exertion, and makes a bold effort to reach, in some small degree, that kind of knowledge, or, if we may so speak, that mode of knowing, which perhaps forms the chief or peculiar intellectual distinction between us and superior spirits. Metaphysical speculation tries to resolve all constituted things into their general elements, and those elements into the ultimate mysterious element of substance, thus leaving behind the various orders and modes of being, to contemplate being itself in its essence. It retires awhile from the consideration of truth, as predicated of particular subjects, to explore those unalterable and universal relations of ideas, which must be the primary principles of all truth. It is not content to acknowledge or to seek the respective causes of the effects which crowd every part of the creation, but would ascertain the very nature of the relation between cause and effect. Not satisfied to infer a Deity from the wise and beautiful *order* of the universe, it would descry the proof of this sublime fact in the bare *existence* of an atom. To ascertain the laws according to which we think, is a gratifying kind of knowledge, but metaphysical speculation asks *what is it to think*, and what is that power which performs so strange an operation ; it also attempts to discover the nature of the connexion of this mysterious agent with a corporeal machine ; and of the relation in which it really stands to that external world, concerning which it receives so many millions of ideas. In short, metaphysical inquiry attempts to trace things to the very first stage in which they can, even to the most penetrating intelligences, be the subjects of a thought, a doubt, or a proposition ; that profoundest abstraction, where

they stand on the first step of distinction and remove from nonentity, and where that one question might be put concerning them, the answer to which would leave no further question possible. And having thus abstracted and penetrated to the state of pure entity, the speculation would come back, tracing it into all its modes and relations ; till at last metaphysical truth, approaching nearer and nearer to the sphere of our immediate knowledge, terminates on the confines of distinct sciences and obvious realities.

Now it would seem evident that this inquiry into primary truth must surpass, in point of dignity, all other speculations. If any man could carry his discoveries as far, and make his proofs as strong, in the metaphysical world, as Newton did in the physical, he would be an incomparably greater man than even Newton. The charge, therefore, of being frivolous, alleged sometimes angrily, and sometimes scornfully, against this department of study, is, so far as the *subjects* are concerned, but a proof of the complete ignorance of those who make it. Ignorance may be allowed to say any thing ; but we are very much surprised, when we sometimes hear men of considerable thought and knowledge, declaring, almost unconditionally, against researches into pure metaphysical subjects ; and also insisting, that our reasonings on moral subjects must never, for a moment, accept the pernicious aid of metaphysical distinctions. We cannot comprehend how it is possible for them to frequent the intellectual world, without often coming in view of some of the great questions peculiarly belonging to this department of thought ; such as those concerning the nature of the mind, the liberty or necessity of human action, the radical distinction between good and evil, space, duration, eternity, the creation of inferior beings, and the attributes of the Supreme. And we wonder that, if it were only to enjoy the sensation of being overwhelmed in sublime mystery, and of finding how much there is reserved to be learnt in a higher state of existence and intelligence, an inquisitive mind should not, when these subjects are forced on the view, make a strong, though it were a transient, effort of investigation. Nor can we conceive how a man of the least sagacity can deeply examine any moral subject, without often finding himself brought to the borders of metaphysical ground ; and there perceiving very clearly that he must either enter on that ground, or leave his subject most partially and unsatis-

factorily discussed. All subjects have first principles, toward which an acute mind feels its investigation inevitably tending, and all first principles are, if investigated to their extreme refinement, metaphysical. The tendency of thought toward the ascertaining of these first principles in every inquiry, as contrasted with a disposition to pass (though perhaps very elegantly or rhetorically) over the surface of a subject, is one of the strongest points of distinction between a vigorous intellect and a feeble one.

It is true enough, to the grief of philosophers, and the humiliation of human ability, that but a very small degree of direct success has ever crowned these profound researches, or perhaps will ever crown them in the present state of our existence. It is also true, that an acute man who will absolutely prosecute the metaphysic of every subject to the last possible extreme, with a kind of rebellion against the very laws and limits of nature, in contempt of his senses, of experience, of the universal perceptions of mankind, and of divine revelation, may reason himself into a vacuity where he will feel as if he were sinking out of the creation. Hume was such an example; but we might cite Locke and Reid, and some other illustrious men, who have terminated their long sweep of abstract thinking, as much in the spirit of sound sense and rational belief as they began.

Yet while we must attribute to weakness or ignorance the contempt or the terror of these inquiries, it is so evident from the nature of things, and the whole history of philosophy, that they must in a great measure fail, when extended beyond certain contracted limits, that it is less for the portion of direct metaphysical science which they can ascertain, than for their general effect on the thinking powers, that we deem them a valuable part of intellectual discipline. Studies of this nature tend very much to augment the power of discriminating clearly between different subjects, and ascertaining their analogies, dependencies, relative importance, and best method of investigation. They enable the mind to dissipate the delusion of first appearances, and detect fallacious subtleties of argument. Between the most superficial view of a subject and its most abstracted principles, there is a gradation of principles still more and more abstracted, conducting progressively, if any mind were strong enough to follow, to that profoundest principle where inquiry must terminate for ever: now, though it be

impossible to approach within the most distant glimmering sight of that principle, yet a mind sharpened by metaphysical investigation, will be able sometimes to penetrate to the second, third, or fourth place in this retiring gradation, and will therefore have a far more competent understanding of the subject, from being able to investigate it to this depth, than another mind which has been accustomed to content itself with an attention merely to the superficies. A man habituated to this deeper examination of every subject of which he seriously thinks, will often be able, and entitled, to advance his propositions with a confidence to which the man that only thinks on the surface of a subject must be a stranger, unless indeed he can totally forget that there *is* any thing deeper than the surface; but then he may very fairly be excused from making any propositions at all.

On the whole, we are of opinion, that though it is most unwise to dedicate the chief part of a studious life to metaphysical speculation, except in the case of those few extraordinary minds which can carry this speculation so far as to render to mankind the service of practically ascertaining the limits which human ability cannot pass, a moderate portion of this study would be of the greatest use to all intellectual men, as a mode of acquiring, in the general exercise of their understandings, at once the double advantage of comprehensiveness and precision.

While therefore we are doing honour to abstract science, for the superior talents which it requires in the investigator, for the augmented powers which it confers in the progress of study, and for the elevating dignity which it bestows in the successful result, we are willing to remember, that after all it is but of subordinate importance. And we cannot help admiring the wisdom of that arrangement, by which nothing that is truly essential to the well-being of man is denied to the exertion of such powers as man generally possesses. The truths connected with piety and the social duties, with the means of personal happiness, and the method of securing an ulterior condition of progressive perfection and felicity, lie at the very surface of moral inquiries; like the fruits and precious stores of the vegetable kingdom, they are necessary to supply inevitable wants, and are placed, by Divine Benevolence, within the reach of the meanest individual. The secret treasures, however, of the moral, as of the physical world, lie deep and

remote from casual observation, and are only yielded up to a series of skilful and laborious efforts : they are indeed wonderful and splendid ; they may gratify the ambition of the curious and ostentatious, and they may denote the gradations of mental nobility ; they may even be applied to more useful purposes ; but they afford no substantial enjoyments, they constitute no part of the necessities or comforts of existence ; a man who wants them, may yet be happy, contented, and secure ; and he who possesses them in profusion, may glitter in the array of intellectual opulence, yet pine, and perish.

About the middle of his life Lord Kames became acquainted with David Hume, who was considerably younger than himself, and who was just then making a manful attempt for fame, and against religion, in the publication of his "Treatise of Human Nature." His letters describing the views and feelings which possessed his mind at that time, and which he seems to have retained with little alteration through life, exhibit but a very mean moral picture of the man. The printing of his "Philosophical Essays," which Lord Kames dissuaded, gave occasion for his lordship's full appearance before the public as a philosopher, in his "Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion," in which he set himself to oppose the opinions of Hume.

The intelligent reader will be anxious to meet with this book ; for he is given to expect, that the author makes out a fine account of human nature, as a well-poised, well-regulated, and most harmonious moral system. He must be curious to see in what manner he disposes of the stupendous depravity, which through all ages has covered the earth with crimes and miseries : and how he has illustrated the grand and happy effects resulting from the general and permanent predominance of the selfish over the benevolent affections, from the imbecility of reason and conscience as opposed to appetite, from the infinitely greater facility of forming and retaining bad habits than good ones, from the incalculable number of false opinions embraced instead of the true, and from the deprivation which is always found to steal very soon into the best institutions. He must, surely, be no less solicitous to see the dignity and certainty of the moral sense verified in the face of the well-known fact, that there is no crime which has not, in the absence of revelation, been committed, in one part of the world or another, without the smallest consciousness of guilt.

It is too evident that our philosopher felt it a light matter, that his speculations were sometimes in opposition to the book which Christians deem of paramount authority. He would pretend, in a general way, a kind of deference for that book, and yet go on with his theories and reasonings all the same. In this we consider his conduct, and the conduct of many other philosophic men, as most absurd, setting aside its irreligion. The book which avows itself, by a thousand solemn and explicit declarations, to be a communication from heaven, is either what it thus declares itself to be, or a most monstrous imposture. If these philosophers hold it to be an imposture, and therefore an execrable deception put on the sense of mankind, how contemptible it is to see them practising their civil cringe, and uttering phrases of deference ! If they admit it to be what it avows itself, how detestable is their conduct in advancing positions and theories, with a cool disregard of the highest authority, confronting and contradicting them all the while ! And if the question is deemed to be yet in suspense, how ridiculous it is to be thus building up speculations and systems, pending a cause which may require their demolition the instant it is decided ! Who would not despise, or pity, a man eagerly raising a fine house on a piece of ground at the very time in doubtful litigation ? Who would not have laughed at a man, who should have published a book of geography, with minute descriptions and costly maps, of distant regions and islands, at the very time that Magellan or Cook was absent on purpose to determine their position, or even verify their existence ? If Lord Kames was doubtful on the question of the truth or imposture of the most celebrated book in the world, a question of which the decision, the one way or the other, is the indispensable preliminary to so many speculations, why did he not bend his utmost strength to decide it ? This had been a work of far more importance than any of those to which he applied himself : of far more importance than his reasonings on the existence of a Deity ; since the very object of these reasonings was to prove, that we have a natural, intuitive, and invincible assurance, that there is a God, and therefore, in fact, that we need no reasoning or writing on the subject. Or if he would not make an effort toward the decision of this great question himself, why should he not lie quiet till the other examiners should decide it ; cautious, even to anxiety, not to hazard, in the mean while, a single position of such a nature as must

assume that the question was already decided, and decided against the pretensions of the book professing to be of Divine authority? But such positions he made no difficulty of advancing, especially in what was called, at that time, his *magnum opus*, the "Sketches of the History of Man."

The leading doctrine of this work appears to be, that man was originally in the state of a most ignorant savage, and that all his knowledge and improvements, subsequently attained, as well in morals and theology, as in arts and sciences, have resulted from the progressive development of his natural powers by natural means: in this same work, notwithstanding, the author affected to pay some deference to the Mosaic history. This idle and irreligious notion was retained and cherished, in spite of the able reasoning of Dr. Doig, of which Lord Woodhouselee gives a lucid abstract, followed by a curious account of the commencement of the acquaintance between Dr. Doig and Lord Kames.

The other distinguished literary performance of Lord Kames, was the "Elements of Criticism." The biographer introduces his remarks on this work, by a very curious inquiry into the history of philosophical criticism, the invention of which he attributes to the Scottish philosopher, after an acute examination of the claims of both the ancients and moderns. We are very much entertained by this ingenious investigation; though Lord Woodhouselee's own acknowledgment of the near approaches to this species of criticism in one or two of the ancients, and the actual, though very imperfect, development of it in several modern writers, especially Akenside, warrants our hesitation to assign to Lord Kames the title of inventor which is wrested, by a rather nice distinction, from Aristotle. In the "Treatise of Rhetoric," Aristotle gave an elaborate analysis of the passions, and of the sources of pain and pleasure, expressly with a view to instruct writers and speakers how to interest those passions. If this was not actually deducing, it was making it easy for the persons so instructed to deduce, from the very constitution of the human mind, the essential laws of good writing and eloquent speaking. It was showing that excellence in these arts must consist, in the adaptation of all their performances to the principles of human nature. By thus illustrating the manner in which the human mind can be subjected to the powers of eloquence, Aristotle laid at least the foundation of philosophical criticism. It is true that this could

not so strictly be called criticism till it should be carried a little further, till a number of precise inferences from this explication of the passions should be propounded, as laws of criticism, and these laws be formally applied to the productions of genius. But this was nearly a matter of course when the first great work of elucidating the passions was accomplished ; when the nature of the materials was ascertained, it dictated at once the mode of operating on them. By a very slight change of form, each proposition, relative to the passions, might have been made a critical rule, applicable to its respective part of the works to be addressed to them. This had been a very slender effort for the great philosopher, if he had chosen to pursue his subject so far ; and therefore it does not claim any very high degree of fame, if a modern has done what he omitted. We allow, however, to Lord Kames, the “ merit of having given to philosophical criticism the form of a science, by reducing it to general principles, methodizing its doctrines, and supporting them everywhere by the most copious and beautiful illustrations.”

VIII.

DEFENCE OF THE STAGE.

Four Discourses on Subjects relating to the Amusement of the Stage. Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge, on Sunday, September 25, and Sunday, October 2, 1808; with copious Supplementary Notes. By JAMES PLUMPTRE, B.D., Fellow of Clare-Hall.

It is not expressed in the title-page, that these discourses were preached, and are published, with an intention hostile to the stage; but the reader can have no doubt as to this point, we presume, when informed that they are dedicated to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge after having received his approbation, that the author is an admirer of some of our most serious and orthodox divines, that he appears to be actuated by a sincere wish to do good, and that the discourses are founded on no other than the following texts:—"Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."—"Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners."—"Let not foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, be once named among you, as becometh saints."—"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." A selection of texts so pointedly applicable, will appear to indicate the preacher's correct view of his subject; and shall we not incur the suspicion of wantonly offending against the third injunction, when we state, that, notwithstanding all these reasons for a contrary presumption, Mr. Plumptre's discourses are meant as a formal defence of the stage?

Merely that a minister of the Christian religion should have considered it as within the scope and duty of his sacred function to undertake such a defence, will not be a fact of sufficient novelty, in our times, to excite surprise; for it would be ungrateful to charge it on defect of reverend instruction, if we

do not know that the play-house is one of our best Christian institutions. But there is something strikingly new in hearing a vindication of the stage from a clergyman, who connects it with a serious admonition that life should be employed in a preparation for eternity, with a zealous inculcation of the apostolic rule of doing all things to the glory of God, with an admission that the general quality of polite literature is decidedly adverse to Christian principles, and with an extended and very instructive illustration of the prevalence of this adverse spirit in even the least exceptionable part of the English drama. If the reader's impression of the incompatibility of what we have here reported to him as combined, should lead him to suspect affectation in the religious parts of the compound, we must assure him there are the strongest marks of sincerity. This being believed, his surmises towards an explanation of such a phenomenon will probably terminate in a conjecture, that, in the preacher's youth, the drama must have inspired a passion so deep as to become like one of the original principles of his mind, which therefore the judgment could never eradicate, nor ever inspect without an involuntary bias operating like a spell. And this is the explanation furnished by the preacher's long dedication, in which he adverts to the leading circumstances of his life, by way of accounting for his writing a book on such a subject, and with such a design.

In course of time he entered, at college, on the studies preparatory to the clerical profession, and obtained a parochial charge, in which his professional duties and studies began entirely to engross his thoughts, "and yielding," he says, "to the prejudices of the world, I determined to relinquish in a great measure the amusement of the stage." He sold a large dramatic library in order to purchase better books, among which were Mrs. More's works, including her dialogue on amusements, and her most excellent preface to her tragedies; these tracts had a great influence on his mind, and for some years he wholly abstained from the amusement of the theatre. "The circumstances of his parish" suggested to him the possible utility of modifying to a moral purpose the most popular convivial songs, of which he has subsequently printed several volumes, with the required expurgations and additions, under the title *Vocal Repository*. This occupation revived his attention to the drama, which he had never been persuaded entirely to condemn, though his opinion of it was somewhat al-

tered. In an interval of professional employment, he meditated a set of lectures to be delivered at the University, partly with a view to the reformation of the stage. This design was not executed ; but an opportune occasion was offered for putting some of the collected materials into the form of sermons, to which, when printed, another portion could be appended as notes. The inducement to adopt the form of sermons was, the hope that they might, as public addresses, be of service to other clergymen, situated in the neighbourhood of the various theatres in this country.

Toward the close of this dedicatory introduction, which we have regarded it as a point of justice to notice thus particularly, the author distinctly meets, what he necessarily anticipated, the censure which will be apt to fall on a clergyman for composing a volume on such a subject. His apology is, that this is the only way in which he may hope to redeem, in some sense, the time which he regrets he has wasted in former dramatic studies. He esteems his knowledge of the subject as very dearly purchased ; but actually having this knowledge, he thinks it is his duty to put it to the use of displaying the moral character of the English drama, of attempting its reformation, and we may add, of correcting the opinions of those austere Christians, who insist on the entire destruction of what he thinks capable of being made a “powerful engine to promote the cause of virtue.”

The first discourse proposes to argue the question, “whether the stage be a thing lawful in itself ;” but we are not quite satisfied that this question takes the subject in the right point of view. What is meant by the stage “in itself,” or abstractedly considered ? If by the stage, described under these terms of limitation, the written drama were meant, no question could be more easily decided, than whether it be lawful to write and to read useful and ingenious things in a dramatic form ; no question, therefore, could be more needless, and we do not see why several pages of the work should have been occupied in answering it. But understanding by the stage literally the theatre and its performances, we do not exactly comprehend what is meant by the question whether it be lawful “in itself.” The estimate of the good or evil of the theatre must necessarily be founded on the combined consideration of a number of particulars ; as the qualities of human nature in general, together with their modifications in any one age or nation,—the

effect on the human mind of exhausting its passions on fictitious objects, the character of that part of society that will at all times be most addicted to amusements, and will chiefly support them,—the natural attendants and consequences of a passion for splendid amusements,—the tendency and the attendant circumstances of immense nocturnal assemblages of people in great towns,—the quality of the works of the great national dramatic writers, that must necessarily form the main stock of the theatre, (till writers shall be put in requisition to dramatize and versify the Homilies and the Whole duty of Man,)—the probable moral character of a set of men and women employed under the circumstances inseparable from a company of players,—and the vast expense, original and permanent, of the whole theatrical establishment. All these and other particulars are involved in the question of the lawfulness of the stage; and therefore we think any attempt to discuss that lawfulness in the abstract, or “in itself,” would too much resemble a discussion of the lawfulness of war abstractedly from all consideration of national enmity, of battle, wounds, and slaughter, of the barbarizing effect on its agents, of the misery of the countries where it prevails, and of national expense and ruin. We do not say that these two things are perfectly parallel; but we mean that the moral estimate of the stage must be formed on a view of all those circumstances, which are naturally relative to it, which are essential to its existence, or with which in point of fact it has invariably been connected.

Admitting most fully, (as every person must, who possesses ordinary moral and religious perceptions,) the gross depravity of the theatre, in the collective character of its constituents, the plays, the players, and a large portion of the spectators, and deploring its widely pernicious influence, our preacher yet endeavours, by distinguishing between the use and abuse of a thing, to defend the theatre “in itself” against those, who, from all they have seen and can anticipate, pronounce it radically and essentially mischief. He has told us, from Ecclesiasticus, that “as a nail sticketh fast between the stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling,” that “strong drinks and wine” have been abused by intemperance, and that even the public worship of God has been perverted to wickedness; and maintains, unanswerably, that we are not therefore, to prohibit buying and selling, and the use of wine, and the worship of God. This argument from analogy ought, at its

weakest point, to prove that the divine providence has, in the order of nature, made a specific direct provision for a play-house ; and, as its strongest point, to prove that the pernicious effects of the play-house should be calmly left to the government of God, as an evil become incidental through human depravity to one of his own appointments, which we are not the less bound in duty to observe because it is liable to such a perversion. It should also prove, that the cessation of acting plays would inflict an evil tantamount to breaking up the regular business and intercourse of society.

But not to dwell on such an unfortunate argument, we will say a word or two on the propriety of giving the denomination of *abuses* to the evils uniformly attending the stage. When we speak of the *abuses* of a thing, we cannot mean less than that the thing in question is at least fitted to do greatly more good than harm, even in the present state of the human mind and of society ; we understand of it that good is its natural general effect, and evil the incidental, man being as he is. We repeat this conditional point ; for, if the thing in question be not calculated mainly to do good *till* human society shall have grown incomparably more virtuous, and thus attained a state capable of neutralizing its operation, or even converting it into something beneficial, it is plainly, for any present use, absolutely bad, necessarily bad, in its regular operation ; and to call this operation an *abuse* is a disingenuous and deceptive language. Now our preacher, while reprobating the obvious mischiefs of the stage under the denomination of “ abuses,” insists that it is notwithstanding adapted, and may by a very practicable reform be brought, to be of the greatest moral utility, in the present condition of society. It would be going very much beyond the limits of our office, to enumerate the principal arguments, (indeed they are amply quoted by Mr. Plumptre) advanced by serious and intelligent men in opposition to his opinion. The best works on the subject are very well known ; and we think the chief good that will be effected by the book before us will be, to induce some of its readers to examine them with more attention. The most material points of the argument were hinted above, in one of the preceding sentences ; and in slightly adverting to several of them we shall employ but very few more.

It must be quite obvious for what purpose it is that society chooses to have a theatre, and by what part of society it must be principally supported. And Mr. Plumptre knows it would

be disingenuous trifling to pretend, that the theatre is raised and supported, with any other view on the part of the public, than that of amusement. A very few individuals may occasionally, or even habitually, attend it for the purpose of philosophical observation ; but even if these were sincerely anxious to apply the knowledge of human nature there acquired to the service of virtue and religion, which is rarely the case, the circumstance would be inexpressibly too trivial to be mentioned against the notorious fact, that the part of the community that require and frequent a theatre, do it for no purpose even the most distantly related to moral improvement. This would be testified, if it needed any testimony, by every one who has listened to the afternoon conversation of a party arranging and preparing to go to the play, and to the retrospective discussion of this party during the 11 o'clock breakfast on the following morning ; or by any one who has listened to the remarks made around him in any part of the boxes, pit, or galleries. The persons, who are intent on moral or intellectual improvement, will be found occupied in a very different manner, inspecting the works of the great historians, philosophers, moralists, or divines, or holding rational conversations with their families or friends, or even (if they judge instruction really is to be obtained from that source,) reading the most celebrated dramatic works in their own or another language, and with a far more judicious and scrutinizing attention than any one exerts amidst the thousand interfering and beguiling circumstances of the theatre. Now if amusement is the grand object sought at the play-house, the object on copiously ministering to which its existence wholly depends, it must, to preserve that existence, adapt itself completely to the taste of that part of society that is devoted to amusement, and will pay its price, in time, health, and money. And what sort of persons are they that compose this part of society ? It really might have been accounted superfluous to say that they are necessarily the trifling and the immoral. They are such of the wealthy as have neither occupation nor benevolence ; the devotees of fashion ; the most thoughtless part of the young, together with what are called young men of spirit, who want a little brisk folly as an interlude to their more vicious pursuits ; loungers of all sorts ; tradesmen who neglect their business ; persons who, in domestic relations, have no notion of cultivating the highest social and intellectual interests ; and old debauchees, together

with the wretched class of beings, whose numbers, vices, and miseries, they can still be proud to augment. It is by the part of the community composed of these classes that the theatre is mainly supported ; and these it must gratify, or it will perish. And if it must gratify this part of the community, of what moral quality must its exhibitions be ? Is it possible to maintain, with a grave face, that those exhibitions can be lessons of pure morality, and even piety,—according to our author's injunction and professed hope that "the stage shall go hand in hand with the pulpit ?" The stage will have a beneficial influence, he says, when the writers, actors, and frequenters compose, and act, and attend plays "with a view to the glory of God," (a most original association of ideas)—and when they preserve amidst these occupations a deep concern for the "salvation of their souls." Now can he believe that there are twenty frequenters of the play-house in all England, who could hear such a state of mind insisted on as necessary even in the common course of life, without sneering at such notions as rank methodism ; or who would fail to mutter a charge of stark madness, if seriously told it was a necessary state of mind in attending the theatre ? Is it not fully settled in the minds of all classes of its frequenters, that it is a place of perfect immunity from grave thought and converse with conscience, and from all puritanism, cant, sermonizing, saintship, godliness, sober representations of life and duty, and squeamish modesty,—excepting so far as some or all of these may be introduced for ridicule, in which mode of introduction, indeed, they are probably greater favourites with an English theatrical audience than all other subjects ? In short, are not the entertainments of the theatre resorted to and delighted in as something confessedly, avowedly, and systematically opposite to what is understood by its frequenters to have formed the chief concern, the prominent and unpopular distinction, of the most devout and holy men, of dying penitents, of Christian apostles, of all the persons most deeply solicitous for the "glory of God," and the "salvation of their souls ?" Mr. Plumptre will fully agree with us, for he has himself very forcibly shown, that, with certain fluctuations, and some degree of modern amendment, in the article of decorum, this has always been the character of the stage, and is the character of the great body of our written drama. And why has this been uniformly the character ? Are we to believe that the writers and actors, with an unparalleled con-

tempt of self-interest, have been for several hundred years forcing on their grand and sole patron, the public, a species of dramatic exhibitions disapproved by that patron? On the contrary, these writers and players have always been to the full as sagacious with respect to their own interest, as any other class of persons who are to prosper or flourish according to the acceptance or disapproval of what they furnish to the public market; and quite as obsequious in accommodating to the public taste. In a few instances, indeed, it may have been attempted to make the stage a pure Christian moralist, and a sort of half Christian divine; and the attempt has failed. It deserved to fail; for, if a manufacturer in any department absolutely *will* make his goods of a quality and form quite different from what he knows the public have uniformly required in that sort of article, nobody compassionates him for the consequences. And we would ask Mr. Plumptre, where is the reasonableness and humanity of requiring the writers and actors of plays to commit a professional suicide by provoking the disgust and indignation of their supporters? The present time shows what an imperious aspect the public, that is, the play-going public, can assume when they are not pleased; and if, instead of the trifling alteration of a little advance in price, there were to be introduced a moral change to one half the extent demanded by our preacher, a change which would instantly give the denomination of "Methodist Theatre," can any one believe this genteel and vulgar rabble would not bellow to a still nobler tune if possible, and fairly baffle at last the utmost rhetoric of the journalists in attempting, even with the aid of Miltonic diction, to describe the "confusion" still "worse confounded?" Parson Kemble, or Saint Cooke, after having once appeared, seriously, in the Gospel Scene, would prefer taking the second turn in the pillory at Charing-cross.

In thus predicting the treatment awaiting the stage when turned methodist, we have not misrepresented our preacher as to the extent of the conversion which he demands. He insists, with respect to the drama, as it ought to be insisted with respect to every institution which is to be retained in society, that its entire spirit and tendency must be made strictly coincident with the Christian religion; and he perfectly agrees with Mrs. More and several other writers, that, besides all the more gross and tangible immorality adhering to our drama, there is a decidedly antichristian quality pre-

vailing through almost its whole mass, so that even most of its greatest beauties please with a noxious lustre. Consistently, therefore, he requires the stage to be purified from its many modes of heathenism, from its erroneous conceptions of divine justice and the atonement of guilt, from its profane language, from its pernicious notions of honour, from its encouragement and extenuations of suicide and duelling, from its extravagant and often corrupt representations of love, and from its indecorum. And all these things, we are to believe, may be swept away in the very face of the persons who are paying expressly for their continuance; and by whom the pure Christian contraries of all these things will be received with abhorrence, unless, while the transmutation is taking place on the stage, a sudden conversion also visits the minds of the audience, as when Peter was preaching. But no, says our author, the change is to be gradual; something is already effected, and "we must go on to perfection." It is true that a very slight superficial amendment has taken place, in avoiding the excessive undisguised grossness which prevailed on the stage in a former century; and this is because the age is grown more delicate, not, probably, because the audience are much more moral; for does Mr. Plumptre really believe that the theatre now contains a less proportion of profligate men and women than in former times? But taking this slight superinduced refinement at whatever he can seriously think it worth, we have his own testimony that the pervading heathenism and profaneness, the detestable moral principles, and the romantic extravagance, remain nearly undiminished; and we would therefore ask him how many ages, at this rate of improvement, we are to be waiting for the stage to attain even the point of *neutrality* between good and evil of moral and religious influence. And should not the melancholy thought of so many tens of thousands, whose principles, with respect to the most important subjects and concerns, are to be acted upon by a powerfully pernicious influence in the course of this long period, have impelled him to exhort his auditors and readers to an instant withdrawalment of all countenance and support from one of the worst enemies of human virtue and happiness? Instead of which, we lament to find a minister of the Christian religion advising the respectable inhabitants of places where plays are acted, to attend them, in order to influence the selection of the pieces and the manners of the company.

Against those who assert the radical evil of the stage, and instead of devising remedies urge the duty of entirely relinquishing it, he raises a strange, and what he seems to think conclusive argument, from the simple fact that the stage is still in existence : as if he would say, It must be a good thing, or capable of being made so, and claims that we should all join hand and heart to support and improve it, because—all efforts to put it down have been unavailing.

It may be hardly worth while to notice, that there seems here an admission that the people are not good enough to reform, any more than they are to give up, a corrupt stage ; or to observe, that it is unfair to complicate the question whether individuals ought to abandon the theatre, with the question whether the state ought to suppress it. But as to the fact which he makes into an argument, namely, that the stage *still exists*, we may properly say to Mr. Plumptre, What is that to you, or to us ? There *exist* also dens of gamblers, and gangs of thieves, and brothels, and clubs for gluttony, drunkenness, and ribaldry ; but you or we are not therefore called upon to study the *better regulation* of these associations, and sometimes to go among them as a “check on their improprieties.”—The complaint that the adversaries of the stage have not employed “conciliating” measures, is passing strange, as coming from a Christian divine, who tells us, that one of those adversaries (Bedford) has cited in his book “*nearly seven thousand instances of impiety and immorality* from the plays in use at that time, and some of which, (though in rather an amended state) still keep a place upon the stage,” p. 36. If such a hideous monster was a thing capable of being “vili-fied,” or deserving to be “conciliated,” what is it on this side the infernal pit that we can lawfully make relentless war upon ?

Our argument above has been, that it is impossible for the stage to become good, in any such Christian sense as Mr. Plumptre requires ; because its character must be faithfully congenial with that of its supporters, and they chiefly consist of the more trifling, irreligious, and immoral part of the community. But perhaps our author thinks that if the stage, by a resolute effort of its directors, were quite to change its character, and become the mirror of Christian sentiments and morals, it might obtain a better class of supporters, and thus afford to lose the frivolous and the dissolute.—And if this

were possible, is it desirable? We are not convinced it would be any great advantage gained to the happiness of society, if we were to see the great temple of wisdom and virtue in Covent Garden lined with an auditory of right reverend bishops, zealous ministers, and the worthiest part of their flocks, drest in sober faces and decent apparel, rank above rank, up to the region of what used to be called "the gods;" if we were to see the pit occupied by a battalion of quakers; if worthy domestic men, who have been accustomed to pass their evenings in reading with their wives and sisters, after half an hour's sport with their children, were to commence the practice of either sliding off alone, or taking their families along with them to the new rendezvous of saints and philosophers; or if virtuous young men qualifying by diligent study for important professions, and young women qualifying for their wives, were seen flocking to the dramatic oracle to inquire how to combine wisdom and love. But if all this were ever so much "a consummation devoutly to be wished," it would never be attained; and the mansion of the christened Apollo might be surrendered to the bats, unless he would forswear his newly-adopted and unprofitable faith, and again invite the profane and profligate. The orderly, industrious, studious, benevolent, and devout, would never, in any state of the theatre, frequent it in sufficient numbers to defray the cost of dresses and wax candles. And besides, what becomes, during this hopeful experiment, of that worse part of the community, which the stage, according to our author, was to have helped the gospel to reform? They are the while wandering away, perverse and hapless beings! from the most precious school ever opened for the corrective discipline of sinners. But the place, originally intended to please them, will not long be occupied by the usurping morality that would assume to mend them. Like the unclean spirit, they will soon re-enter the swept and garnished house, and even, like him, bring auxiliary companions, the more effectually to assert *whose* house it is. We will not waste more words. Mr. Plumptre knows that no theatre could support itself under the odium of maintaining an explicit hostility against not only direct grossness and vice, but all antichristian principles of morality. It is a ruined thing, if not only the women of the town, and the vile gangs of journeymen and gentlemen blades that frequent the place to joke with them, purchase them,

or insult them, but also the more decorous holders of a fashionable moral creed, are to be dosed there with Christian medicaments, and fumigated off with an effluvium a hundred times more nauseous to them than the smell of the burning fish was to the goblin that haunted Tobias's bride. As long as there is a play-house, it will and must be assumed, as their legitimate place of resort, by the least serious and the most irreligious and profligate class of the nation. Where else indeed should they resort?—to the evening lecture at church or at the conventicle?—Thus the stage, so far from contributing to promote the ascendancy of good over evil in society, will be the faithful attendant and ally of the evil, at once living on it and ministering to it, just so long as a sufficient measure of it shall exist in the shape of vain and profligate persons to support the amusement, and perishing at length when Christianity shall have left too few of these persons for this purpose. Or shall we suppose it will then arise and flourish afresh under a renovated Christianized character? That is to say, shall we suppose, that at such a happy period, it will be deemed one of the worthiest efforts of virtue and religion to raise and furnish edifices at the expense of £150,000 apiece, and maintain in each of them, at a cost equal to that of several hospitals, or of some fifty or a hundred of Lancaster's schools, an establishment just for the purpose of employing a number of persons to sham the name and dress of certain fictitious foreigners, or, if you please, good home-bred Christians, and recite a course of lines from a book which the audience could have quietly read at home; and, if they are tragic lines, read, according to the opinion of Dr. Johnson, with a deeper impression?

This view of the necessary character of the stage forms but a narrow section of the argument against it; and we have dwelt on it, not with the design of any thing so absurd as debating the general subject, in an article of a journal, but for the particular purpose of exposing Mr. Plumptre's doctrine that "the evil attached to the stage is no part of its inherent quality, but arises merely from the *abuse* of it."—P. 7. With regard to many of the specific evils attendant on the theatre, he has himself done ample justice to the subject, partly by quoting, with a candour not to be surpassed, and deserving of the highest applause, a number of the strongest passages from the adversaries of the stage, Collier, Law, Witherspoon, Styles,

&c., and partly by an indictment drawn up by himself, of which the several counts are excellently illustrated and sustained by passages furnished by his extensive acquaintance with the English drama. These illustrations are placed in the mass of notes at the end of the book, which form a very entertaining and instructive miscellany. One portion of these notes is a kind of marshalling of great names against Mr. Styles, who had ventured to boast that the most venerable authorities, the most illustrious moralists and philosophers of all ages, have been enemies of the stage; too rash a boast, as it should seem; for Mr. Plumptre has proved that Bishop Rundle of most *pious* celebrity, that Mr. Cumberland, and Mr. Dibdin, and a Mrs. Douglas, which last person tells "the theologians and philosophers" they have no business to say a word about a subject so much above their faculties as the merits of the drama,—that these illustrious authorities are in favour of the stage. Not, however, that these are the only names in array; for he cites, on the same side, opinions or implications variously modified and limited, from Addison, Blackmore, Tillotson, Seed, Hanway, Johnson, Gilpin, and Gisborne. It is irksome enough to see quoted from such a writer as this last, "the stage ought to recommend itself as the nurse of virtue." In another part of the book it is quoted from him, that there is one quarter from which the purification of the stage, with respect to all offences against modesty, "might be effected at once. To those who act under a royal license, a single hint from Royal Authority would be sufficient." And why then, we ask, has not this purification been effected? We might ask too, whether it is any part of the purification which this "hint" is to accomplish, to banish from the stage persons whose whole life is an offence against modesty.

We are ashamed to find a Christian minister vindicating, under any circumstances, the impious practice of addressing the Deity on the stage.

"Many, indeed," (says Mr. Plumptre,) "have doubted and denied the propriety of addresses to the Deity in *representations*, because they are not realities. But, if a character be introduced, as an example for our imitation, in such a circumstance, as, were he in real life, trust in God and prayer to him would be a duty, provided it be done with reverence, it does not appear to be a mockery and in vain, but a highly useful lesson. Are we not too little accustomed, too much ashamed to let ourselves be seen, or known to be on our knees before God, in real life? We are commanded, indeed, not to pray in *public*, for the sake of being *seen* of men; for the

motive ought to be to please God ; but we are commanded to let our light so shine before men, *that they may see our good works*, and GLORIFY OUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN."—P. 29.

We must think with Mr. Styles, that "a fictitious character on the stage has nothing to do with heaven." The personation of such a character in the act of prayer endeavours to pass itself for some very undefinable species of *reality*, and claims to excite nearly the same feelings that reality would do. It is intended, therefore, that the prayer in question shall be regarded rather as a real act of piety, than as the mere historical reading or reciting, if we may so express ourselves, of a prayer supposed to have been uttered by the character whom the player personates. This being the case, the player does assume to make, and the audience are called to witness, an *actual address to the Deity*, expressive of sentiments, and relative to a situation, which are totally fictitious ; and this we think the vilest impiety.

As to the benefit arising from seeing examples of mingling piety with the concerns of life, the playhouse, with all its mass of profaneness and ribaldry, must be a marvellous proper place for making the exhibition, and receiving the edification.

IX.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

The Private Correspondence of Benjamin Franklin, LL.D., F.R.S., &c. Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America at the Court of France, and for the Treaty of Peace and Independence with Great Britain, &c. &c. Comprising a Series of Letters on Miscellaneous, Literary, and Political Subjects, written between the Years 1753 and 1790; illustrating the Memoirs of his Public and Private Life; and developing the Secret History of his political Transactions and Negotiations. Now first published from the Originals, by his Grandson WILLIAM TEMPLE FRANKLIN.

THIS ample assemblage of letters is intended as a sequel to the Memoirs of Dr. Franklin, written by himself. Or rather, it appears as constituting the latter half of that work, and is designated as the second volume, though preceding by a considerable interval of time the publication of the regular narrative.

The reader will feel little disposition to complain of the withholding of all information relative to the manner in which these letters could have been collected, the repository where many of them must long have lain, the proportion, in number, of those that have been suppressed, to that of these which are produced, or the question whether any considerable liberties have been taken in suppressing parts and passages of these. He will acknowledge that quite a sufficient number, and perhaps somewhat more, are given, that they embrace a considerable diversity of subjects, that they afford decisive internal evidence of authenticity, and that they very effectually display the talents and character of the writer.

The collection is distributed into three parts,—letters on miscellaneous subjects—letters on American politics—and letters on the negotiations for peace. In each part they are put

in chronological series, and therefore they are placed as far as the shorter series extend back in time, in three parallel courses, thus bringing the writer thrice through the same stages of his life and employments; and that, too, after the reader may be presumed to have passed through them once already in the narrative. This is the best arrangement for facilitating the reader's acquisition of the historical information to be derived from the political portions of the correspondence; but it less comports with a strictly biographical purpose, since, instead of our beholding, during the progress, the *whole* character and the diversified agency of the man, we are shown only one section or side, if we may so express it, of that character and agency at once, and are brought back to go with him again, and yet again, through the same periods of his life, in order to have another and still another view of the same person. We would rather, if we conveniently might, take our whole view of the man in one progress, beholding him exhibited, at each step and stage, in each and all of his capacities, characteristics, and occupations.

Perhaps, however, when a large portion of a man's letters relate solely to a grand national affair, which they very greatly elucidate, it may, after all, be as well to let the biographical purpose and interest become secondary, and make such a disposition of them as will be most advantageous for understanding that affair of history. Indeed, if the display of the man were to be regarded as the chief object in this part of the correspondence, we are apprehensive that most readers might wish it retrenched, as less than one half the number of letters would have sufficed for that; but let the object be a disclosure of the secret history of the American Revolution, and nearly all of them may be found to have their pertinence and value.

Taken all together, this collection of letters would, we think, in the absence of all other documents and representations, afford sufficient means for a competent estimate of the writer. The character displayed by them is an unusual combination of elements. The main substance of the intellectual part of it, is a superlative good sense, evinced and acting in all the modes of that high endowment; such as,—an intuitively prompt and perfect, and steadily continuing apprehension; a sagacity which with admirable ease strikes through all superficial and delusive appearances of things, to the

essence and the true relations ; a faculty of reasoning in a manner marvellously simple, direct, and decisive ; a power of reducing a subject or question to its plainest principles ; an unaffected daring to meet whatever is to be opposed, in an explicit, direct manner, and in the point of its main strength ; a facility of applying familiar truths and self-evident propositions, for resolving the most uncommon difficulties ; and a happy adroitness of illustration by parallel cases, supposed or real, the real ones being copiously supplied by a large and most observant acquaintance with the world. It is obvious how much this same accurate observation of the world would contribute to that power of interpreting the involuntary indications of character, and of detecting motives and designs in all sorts of persons he had to deal with, and to that foresight of consequences in all practical concerns, in which he was probably never surpassed. It is gratifying to observe how soon he would see to the very bottom of the characters and schemes of plausible hypocrites and veteran statesmen, proud as they might be of the recollected number of their stratagems and their dupes, and so confident of their talents for undermining and overreaching, that it took some of them a considerable time to become fully aware of the hazard of attempting their practice upon the republican. Not one of their inadvertencies, or of their over-done professions, or of the inconsistencies into which the most systematic craft is liable to be sometimes betrayed, was ever lost upon him. There are in the course of these letters, curious and striking instances of personages of great pretension, and of other personages, seeking to effect their purposes, under the guise of making no pretension, putting him in full possession of their principles and designs, by means of circumstances which they little suspected to be betraying them, and for which he, if it was necessary, could be discreet enough to appear never the wiser. In process of time, however, courtiers, ministers, intriguers, and the diplomatic gentry, had the mist cleared from their faculties sufficiently to understand what kind of man it was they had to do with.

There is one thing deficient in this collection, for the perfect illustration of the independence of Dr. Franklin's judgment. He resided a long course of years in France, in the exercise of the most important official functions for the American States, both during and after the war ; and a great major-

ity of the letters are dated at Passy, near Paris. As the French government was a most efficient friend to America in that momentous and perilous season, and her minister at the French Court experienced there all manner of respect and complaisance, it was natural enough he should speak in terms of considerable favour of that people and their governors,—of favour to certain extent,—*quoad hoc*. But we are in vain curious to know whether this complacency was any thing like limited by justice. We are compelled to doubt it, from observing the many unqualified expressions of partiality to the French and their rulers, and from nowhere finding any terms appropriate to the frivolity of the nation, and the despotism and ambition of the government. Why do we find none such? Are there no preserved letters manifesting that the republican philosopher maintained a clear perception and a condemnatory judgment of such things, in spite of the Parisian adulation to himself, and the aid given to the rising republic by a tyrannic monarchy? And as to that aid itself, it would be one of the most memorable examples of the weakness of strong minds, if Franklin could ever for a moment mistake, or estimate otherwise than with contempt, the motive that prompted it; a motive which, in any case in which he had not been interested, would have placed the whole affair of this alliance and assistance in a quite different light from that in which he seemed so gratified to regard it.—A profligate and tyrannic court, a disinterested friend to a people asserting their freedom, and in the form of a republic! And could the American ambassador, though gratified, of course, by the fact of powerful assistance, affect to accept from that court, without a great struggle with his rising indignant scorn, the hypocritical cant and cajolery about co-operation against oppression, respect for the virtuous and interesting patriots of the new world, and the like, as expressive of its true principles in seizing so favourable an occasion for giving effect to its hatred against England? And could he, into the bargain, contemplate an enslaved and debased people, pass in the front of the Bastile, and behold the ruinous extravagance and monstrous depravity of that court, with feelings which required nothing to keep them in the indulgent tone, but the recollection of French troops and French money employed in America?

If the editor had in his possession any letters or other manuscripts tending to prove that no such beguilement took effect

upon a judgment on which so many other kinds of persons and things attempted in vain to impose, it was due to Franklin's reputation for independence of judgment, to have given them, even though they should have brought some impeachment upon his sincerity in the grateful and laudatory expressions repeatedly here employed respecting France, and its interference in the contest.

In a general moral estimate of his qualities, insincerity would seem to find very little place. His principles appear to have borne a striking correspondence, in simplicity, directness, and decision, to the character of his understanding. Credit may be given him for having, through life, very rarely prosecuted any purpose which he did not deliberately approve ; and his manner of prosecution was distinguished, as far as appears, by a plain honesty in the choice of means, by a contempt of artifice and petty devices, by a calm inflexibility, and by a greater confidence of success than is usually combined with so clear and extended a foresight of the difficulties ;—but indeed that foresight of the difficulties might justify his confidence of the adaptation of his measures for encountering them.

He appears to have possessed an almost invincible self-command, which bore him through all the negotiations, strifes with ignorance, obstinacy, duplicity, and opposing interest, and through tiresome delays and untoward incidents, with a sustained firmness, which preserved to him in all cases the most advantageous exercise of his faculties, and with a prudence of deportment beyond the attainment of the most disciplined adepts in mere political intrigue and court-practice. He was capable, indeed, of feeling an intense indignation, which comes out in full expression in some of the letters, relating to the character of the English government, as displayed in its policy toward America. This bitter detestation is the most unreservedly disclosed in some of his confidential correspondence with David Hartley, an English member of parliament, a personal friend of Franklin, a constant advocate, to a measured extent, of the Americans, and a sort of self-offered, clandestine, but tacitly-recognized medium for a kind of understanding, at some critical periods, between the English government and Dr. Franklin, without costing the ministers the condescension of official intercourse and inquiry. These vituperative passages have a corrosive energy, by virtue of force of

mind and of justice, which perfectly precludes all appearance of littleness and mere temper in the indignation. It is the dignified character of Cato or Aristides. And if a manifestation of it in similar terms ever took place in personal conference with such men as were its objects, it must have appeared any thing rather than an ungoverned irritability ; nor would it have been possible to despise the indignant tone in which contempt was mingled with anger, as far as the two sentiments are compatible. Believing that the men who provoked these caustic sentences did for the most part deserve them, we confess we have read them with that sort of pleasure which is felt in seeing justice made to strike, by vindictive power of mind, on the characters of men whose stations defended their persons and fortunes from the most direct modes of retribution.

When, at length, all was accomplished that, with long and earnest expostulation, he had predicted, and been ridiculed for predicting, to the English statesmen, as the certain consequence of persisting in their infatuated course, we find no rancorous recollection, no language of extravagant triumph at the splendid result, nor of excessive self-complacency in the retrospect of his own important share in conducting the great undertaking to such a consummation. His feelings do not seem to have been elated above the pitch of a calm satisfaction at having materially contributed to the success of a righteous cause, a success in which he was convinced he saw not simply the vindication of American rights, but the prospect of unlimited benefit to mankind.

And here it may be remarked, that his predominant passion appears to have been a love of the useful. The useful was to him the *summum bonum*, the supreme fair, the sublime and beautiful, which it may not perhaps be extravagant to believe he was in quest of every week for half a century, in whatever place, or study, or practical undertaking. No department was too plain or humble for him to occupy himself in for this purpose ; and in affairs of the most ambitious order this was still systematically his object. Whether in directing the constructing of chimneys or of constitutions, lecturing on the saving of candles or on the economy of national revenues, he was still intent on the same end, the question always being how to obtain the most of solid tangible advantage by the plainest and easiest means. There has rarely been a mortal, of high in-

telligence and flattering fame, on whom the pomps of life were so powerless. On him were completely thrown away the oratorical and poetical heroics about glory, of which heroics it was enough that he easily perceived the intention or effect to be, to explode all sober truth and substantial good, and to impel men, at the very best of the matter, through some career of vanity, but commonly through mischief, slaughter, and devastation, in mad pursuit of what amounts at last, if attained, to some certain quantity of noise, and empty show, and intoxicated transient elation. He was so far an admirable spirit for acting the Mentor to a young republic. It will not be his fault if the citizens of America shall ever become so servile to European example, as to think a multitude of supernumerary places, enormous salaries, and a factitious economy of society, a necessary security or decoration of that political liberty which they enjoy in pre-eminence above every nation on earth. In these letters of their patriarch and philosopher, they will be amply warned, by repeated and emphatical representations, of the desperate mischief of a political system in which the public resources shall be expended in a way to give the government both the interest and the means to corrupt the people. Of such representations the following passages will afford a tolerably fair specimen.

“Her” (England’s) “great disease at present is the number and enormous salaries and emoluments of office. Avarice and ambition are strong passions, and separately act with great force on the human mind; but when both are united and may be gratified in the same object, their violence is almost irresistible, and they hurry men headlong into factions and contentions destructive of all good government. As long therefore as these great emoluments subsist, your parliament will be a stormy sea, and your public counsels confounded by private interests.”

“When I think of your present crazy constitution and its diseases, I imagine the enormous emoluments of place to be among the greatest.” “As it seems to be a settled point at present that the minister must govern the parliament, who are to do every thing he would have done, and he is to bribe them to do this, and the people are to furnish the money to pay these bribes, the parliament appears to me a very expensive machine for government, and I apprehend the people will find out in time that they may as well be governed, and that it will be much cheaper to be governed, by the minister alone.”

“As long as the immense profits of these offices subsist, members of the shortest and most equally chosen parliaments will have them in view, and contend for them, and their contests will have all the same ruinous consequences. To me there appears to be but one effectual remedy, and that not likely to be adopted by so corrupt a nation; which is to abolish these profits, and make every place of *honour* a place of *burden*. By that means

the effect of one of the passions above mentioned would be taken away, and something would be added to counteract the other."

"The parliament have of late been acting an egregious farce, calling before them the mayor and aldermen of Oxford, for proposing a sum to be paid by their old members on being re-chosen at the next election; and sundry printers and brokers for advertising and dealing in boroughs, &c. The Oxford people were sent to Newgate, and discharged after some days, on humble petition, and receiving the Speaker's reprimand upon their knees. The house could scarcely keep countenance, knowing as they all do, that the practice is general. People say they mean nothing more than to beat down the price by a little discouragement of borough jobbing, now that their own elections are all coming on. The price indeed is grown exorbitant, no less than 4000*l.* for a member. Mr. Beckford has brought in a bill for preventing bribery and corruption in elections, wherein was a clause to oblige every member to swear, on admission into the house, that he had not directly or indirectly given any bribe to any elector, &c. but this was so universally exclaimed against as answering no end but perjuring the members, that he has been obliged to withdraw that clause. It was indeed a cruel contrivance of his, worse than the gunpowder-plot. Mr. Thurlow opposed his bill by a long speech. Beckford in reply gave a dry hit to the house, that is repeated every where: 'The honourable gentleman, in his learned discourse, gave us first one definition of corruption, and then another definition of corruption, and I think he was about to give us a third. Pray does that gentleman imagine *there is any member of this house that does not know what corruption is?*' which occasioned only a roar of laughter, for they are so hardened in their practice that they are very little ashamed of it."

"The parliament is up and the nation in a ferment with the new elections. Great complaints are made that the natural interests of country gentlemen in their neighbouring boroughs, is overborne by the moneyed interests of the new people who have got sudden fortunes in the Indies, or as contractors, &c. £4000 is now the market price for a borough. In short, this whole venal nation is now at market, will be sold for about Two Millions, and might be bought out of the hands of the present bidders (if he would offer half a million more) by the very devil himself."

It would, however, have been but fair to have acknowledged how inconsiderable a portion of the nation they are whose venality it is that, on these occasions, has the *effect* of selling the whole people; and that, the case being so, the fact of the nation's being sold does not prove its general venality. How perverse is its fortune! that in such a state of its representation it might be sold, though a vast majority of its people were of the sternest integrity; whereas, in an enlarged and more equalized state of its representation, with a more frequent return of elections, it could not be sold, though every living thing in the land were venal, for the plain reason that the buyers could not come into such a market. They could not afford to purchase such a number of articles miscalled consciences, even

at the low rate apiece which is the utmost worth of most of them, upon any calculation of three years' chances of indemnification, by obtaining some moderately-remunerated office, with the additional chances as to the duration of their occupancy. And by the way, is not this obvious view of the matter, more than an answer to all that sophistry and corruption can say for things as they are? Can there be any more decided test of a bad or a good construction of political institutions, than that they appear framed expressly to promote corruption and venality, and to avail themselves of them, like our present system of representation; or that they disappoint and discourage corruption, by being of a constitution the least capable that human wisdom can contrive, of finding their advantage in that corruption?

The political portion (the larger portion) of this correspondence, will be a valuable addition to the mass of lessons and documents which might have been supposed long since sufficient to disenchant all thinking men of their awful reverence for state-mystery, and cabinet-wisdom and ministerial integrity, and senatorial independence. We would hope, in spite of all appearances, that the times may not be very far off, when the infatuation of accepting the will of the persons that happen to be in power, as the evidence of wisdom and right, will no longer bereave nations of their sense, and their peace, and the fruits of their industry and improvements,—no longer render worse than useless, for the public interests,—the very consciences of men whose conduct relative to their individual concerns bears a fair appearance of sound principle and understanding. We will hope for a time when no secret history of important events will display the odious spectacle of a great nation's energies and resources, and the quiet of the world, surrendered without reserve, to the mercy, and that mercy "cruel," of such men as Franklin had to warn in vain of the consequences of their policy respecting America.

The correspondence gives an exhibition of almost every thing that ought to enforce on a nation the duty of exercising a constitutional jealousy of the executive. English readers may here see how worthily were confided the public interest of their forefathers, involving to an incalculable extent of their own. They may see how, while those forefathers looked on, many of them for a great while too infatuated with what they called loyalty to dare even a thought of disapprobation, those

interests were sported with and sacrificed by men who cared not *what* they sacrificed, so long as their own pride, and resentment, and emolument, could stand exempted. They may see how fatally too late those forefathers were in discovering that their public managers had begun their career in the madness of presumption ; and that warning, and time, and disastrous experiments, and national suffering, had done nothing towards curing it. They will see how, while a show of dignity, and a talk of justice, national honour, and so forth, were kept up before the people, there were no expedients and tricks too mean, no corruptions too gross, no cabals and compromises of disagreeing selfishness too degrading, to have their share in the state-machinery which was working behind this state-exhibition. What is the instruction resulting from all this, but the very reverse of what we have so often heard inculcated on the one hand by interested and corrupt advocates, and on the other by good men of the quietist school ? What should it be but that nations ought to maintain a systematic habitual jealousy and examination relative to the principles and schemes of their rulers ; that especially all movements towards a *war* should excite a ten-fold vigilance of this distrust, it being always a strong probability that the measure is wrong, but a perfect certainty that an infinity of delusions will be poured out on the people to persuade them that it is right.

But to return to an *honest* politician. Great admiration is due to the firm, explicit, and manly tone, with which he meets the inquiries, the insidious propositions, or the hinted menaces, of the hostile government and its agents ; to the patience with which he encounters the same overtures, and attempted impositions, in a succession of varied forms ; to the coolness and clearness with which he sometimes discusses, and the dignified contempt with which he sometimes spurns. Very many of the political letters afford examples ; we are particularly struck with one, (p. 250, 4to.) addressed from Paris to a person who had written to him from Brussels, without a genuine name, and with other circumstances of mystery, suggesting also a mysterious mode, which the Doctor did not adopt, of transmitting a reply. The letter was designed to obtain Franklin's opinion of certain unofficially proposed terms of accommodation, and his answer shows that he believed the writer to be a person of more importance than the ordinary sort of agents that now and then made their attempts upon him.

It is far too long for us to insert a fourth part of it ; but it is an example of vigorous thought, compressed composition, and high-toned feeling. We are tempted to quote some passages. It begins thus :

“ Sir,

“ I received your letter dated at Brussels the 16th past. [The 16th of June, 1778.] My vanity might possibly be flattered by your expressions of compliment to my understanding, if your proposals did not more clearly manifest a mean opinion of it.”

“ You conjure me in the name of the omniscient and just God before whom I must appear, and by my hopes of future fame, to consider if some expedient cannot be found to put a stop to the desolation of America, and prevent the miseries of a general war. As I am conscious of having taken every step in my power to prevent the breach, and no one to widen it, I can appear cheerfully before that God, fearing nothing from his justice in this particular, though I have much occasion for his mercy in many others. As to my future fame, I am content to rest it on my past and present conduct, without seeking an addition to it in the crooked, dark paths you propose to me, where I should most certainly lose it. This your solemn address would therefore have been more properly made to your sovereign and his venal parliament. He and they who wickedly began and madly continue a war for the desolation of America, are alone accountable for the consequences....”

“ You think we flatter ourselves and are deceived into an opinion that England *must* acknowledge our independency. We on the other hand think you flatter yourselves in imagining such an acknowledgment a vast boon which we strongly desire, and which you may gain some great advantage by granting or withholding. We have never asked it of you. We only tell you that you can have no treaty with us but as an independent State ; and you may please yourselves and your children with the rattle of your right to govern us, as long as you have done with that of your King's being King of France, without giving us the least concern if you do not attempt to exercise it. That this pretended right is indisputable, as you say, we utterly deny. Your parliament never had a right to govern us, and your King has forfeited it. But I thank you for letting me know a little of your mind, that even if the parliament should acknowledge our independency, the act would not be binding to posterity, and that your nation would resume and prosecute the claim as soon as they found it convenient. We suspected before that you would not be actually bound by your conciliatory acts longer than till they had served their purpose of inducing us to disband our forces ; but we were not certain that you were knaves by principle, and that we ought not to have the least confidence in your offers, promises, or treaties, though confirmed by parliament....”

In the concluding sentences, (injured in one instance by a bad pun,) he takes the whole advantage of being a republican and an American.

“ This proposition of delivering ourselves bound and gagged, ready for

hanging without even a right to complain, and without a friend to be found afterwards among all mankind, you would have us embrace upon the faith of an act of parliament! An act of your parliament! This demonstrates that you do not yet know us, and that you fancy we do not know you. But it is not merely this flimsy faith that we are to act upon; you offer us *hope*, the hope of PLACES, PENSIONS, and PEERAGE. These, judging from yourselves, you think are motives irresistible. This offer to corrupt us, sir, is with me your credential, and convinces me that you are not a private volunteer in your application. It bears the stamp of British Court intrigue, and the signature of your King. But think for a moment in what light it must be viewed in America. PLACES, which cannot come among us, for you take care by a special article to keep them to yourselves. We must then pry the salaries in order to enrich ourselves with these places. But you will give us PENSIONS; probably to be paid too out of your expected American revenue; and which none of us can accept without deserving and perhaps obtaining a *suspension*. PEERAGES! alas! sir, our long observation of the vast servile majority of your peers, voting constantly for every measure proposed by a minister, however weak or wicked, leaves us small respect for them, and we consider it as a sort of tar-and-feather honour, or a mixture of foulness and folly, which every man among us who should accept from your King, would be obliged to renounce or exchange for that conferred by the mobs of their own country, or wear it with everlasting shame. I am, sir, your humble servant."

His perfect superiority to all envy of this sort of honours, under any circumstances, is shown, not by laborious depreciation, but by the transient casual expressions of slight which give the more genuine indications of contempt,—of that easy and true contempt which it costs a man no trouble to maintain. The only instance in which we recollect his taking pains about the matter, is in reference to that little whim of the transatlantic republicans, the order of the Cincinnati, which some of them wished to make an hereditary distinction, in humble imitation of the European institution of nobility. He felt it due to the character of their revolution and their republican polity, to set himself in earnest to explode, by ridicule and argument, this piece of folly. If for the honour of their own persons the aspirants liked such a bauble, even let them have it, he said, at whatever it was worth; but he had no mercy on the absurdity of pretending to transmit down honorary distinctions to persons who by the nature of the case cannot have earned them.

It has been hinted already that, as a matter of general reading, the political portion of these letters will perhaps be thought too large. But it may be presumed that documents illustrating the American Revolution, may excite more interest now than they would have done between twenty and

thirty years since. About that time the old world appeared to be on the eve of such a revolution in favour of liberty, as would have rendered, at least for a time, that of the American colonies a comparatively inconsiderable event. The military process through which it had been accomplished, was already begun to be spoken of as "the little war;" and the republican confederation of a number of scantily inhabited farming districts, was ceasing to be an imposing spectacle, when European monarchies, of immense population, and ancient fame for literature, arts, arms, and royal and aristocratic magnificence, were seen melting and moulding, amid volcanic fires, into new forms, bearing a transient, indeed, and dubious, but at first hopeful semblance of beauty and vigour. The long and tremendous tumult of all the moral elements, involving such a cost of every human interest, as could be repaid by no less a result, than a mighty change for the better of the whole political and social condition of Europe, has subsided in the consolidation of the very system by which its commencement was provoked, with the addition of an infinite account of depravity and poverty. But America, all this while, has been exulting in the consequences of *her* revolution, and still triumphs in freedom undiminished, in an administration of government of which it is *not* the grand business to squander or devour her resources, and in a prosperity and power continually enlarging, with unlimited capabilities and prospects. Here then is the revolution that has succeeded, while all things else have failed: it eclipses, now, the importance of all the events by which its own importance appeared about to be eclipsed; and the interest which it claims to excite, will be progressive with its magnificent consequences. The proprietor, therefore, of these papers, has been wise or fortunate in reserving them to become old in his possession.

The most entertaining, however, and by no means an un-instructive division, of the letters, will be the first part, called "miscellaneous," and consisting chiefly of letters of friendship, abounding in tokens of benevolence, sparkling not unfrequently into satiric pleasantry, but of a bland good-natured kind, arising in the most easy natural manner, and thrown off with admirable simplicity and brevity of expression. There are short discussions relating to various arts and conveniences of life, plain instructions for persons deficient in cultivation,

and the means for it ; condolences on the death of friends, and frequent references, in an advanced stage of the correspondence, to his old age and approaching death. Moral principles and questions are sometimes considered and simplified ; and American affairs are often brought in view, though not set forth in the diplomatic style.

It is unnecessary to remark, that Franklin was not so much a man of books as of affairs ; but he was not the less for that a speculative man. Every concern became an intellectual subject to a mind so acutely and perpetually attentive to the relation of cause and effect. For enlargement of his sphere of speculation, his deficiency of literature, in the usual sense of the term, was excellently compensated by so wide an acquaintance with the world, and with distinguished individuals of all ranks, professions, and attainments.

It may be, however, that a more bookish and contemplative employment of some portion of his life, would have left one deficiency of his mental character less palpable. There appears to have been but little in that character of the element of sublimity. We do not meet with many bright elevations of thought, or powerful enchanting impulses of sentiment, or brilliant transient glimpses of ideal worlds. Strong, independent, comprehensive, never-remitting intelligence, proceeding on the plain ground of things, and acting in a manner always equal to, and never appearing at moments to surpass itself, constituted his mental power. In its operation it has no risings and fallings, no disturbance into eloquence or poetry, no cloudiness of smoke indeed, but no darting of flames. A consequence of this perfect uniformity is, that all subjects treated, appear to be on a level, the loftiest and most insignificant being commented on in the same unalterable strain of a calm plain sense, which brings all things to its own standard, insomuch that a great subject shall sometimes seem to become less while it is elucidated, and less commanding while it is enforced. In discoursing of serious subjects, Franklin imposes gravity on the reader, but does not excite solemnity, and on grand ones he never displays or inspires enthusiasm.

It is, however, curious to see such a man just now and then a little touched with romance : as, for instance, in the following letter to Dr. Priestley :—

"I always rejoice to hear of your being still employed in experimental researches into nature, and of the success you meet with. The rapid progress *true science* now makes, occasions my regretting sometimes that I was born so soon. It is impossible to imagine the height to which may be carried in a thousand years, the power of man over matter; we may perhaps learn to deprive large masses of the gravity, and give them absolute levity for the sake of easy transport. Agriculture may diminish its labour and double its produce: all diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured, (not excepting even that of old age) and our lives lengthened at pleasure even beyond the antediluvian standard. O that moral science were in as fair a way of improvement, that men would cease to be wolves to one another, and that human beings would at length learn what they now improperly call humanity!"

In a very friendly letter to Dr. Mather, of Boston, he mentions a very simple cause as having, in early life, contributed to determine him to that course of practical utility which he pursued to the last.

"I received your kind letter with your excellent advice to the people of the United States. Such writings, though they may be lightly passed over by many readers, yet if they make a deep impression in one active mind of a hundred, the effects may be considerable. Permit me to mention one little instance which, though it relates to myself, will not be quite uninteresting to you. When I was a boy, I met with a book entitled *Essays to do Good*, which I think was written by your father. It had been so little regarded by a former possessor, that several leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking as to have an influence on my conduct through life: for I have always set a greater value on the character of a *doer of good*, than on any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book. You mention your being in your seventy-eighth year: I am in my seventy-ninth year; we are grown old together. It is now more than sixty years since I left Boston; but I remember well both your father and grandfather, having heard them both in the pulpit, and seen them in their houses. The last time I saw your father was in the beginning of 1724. He received me into his library, and on my taking leave, showed me a shorter way out of the house through a narrow passage, which was crossed by a beam over head. We were still talking as I withdrew, he accompanying me behind, and I turning partly towards him, when he said hastily, "Stoop, stoop." I did not understand him till I felt my head hit against the beam. He was a man that never missed any occasion of giving instruction; and upon this he said to me, *you are young, and have the world before you; stoop as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps*. The advice thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me, and I often think of it, when I see pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people by their carrying their heads too high."

But the most remarkable letter in the volume, is one written in his eighty-fifth year, to Dr. Ezra Stiles, President of

Yale College, who had in a very friendly and respectful manner solicited some information respecting the aged philosopher's opinion of the Christian religion. Franklin's reply to an inquiry which he says had never been made to him before, is written with kindness and seriousness, but nevertheless in terms not a little evasive. But perhaps it would in effect have as much explicitness as his venerable correspondent could wish, for it would too clearly inform the good man, as it does its present readers, that this philosopher, and patriot, and, as in many points of view he may most justly be regarded, philanthropist, was content and prepared to venture into another world without any hold upon the Christian faith. In many former letters, as well as in this last, he constantly professes his firm belief in an Almighty Being, wise, and good, and exercising a providential government over the world; and in a future state of conscious existence, rendered probable by the nature of the human soul, and by the analogies presented in the renovations and reproductions in other classes of being, and rendered necessary by the unsatisfactory state of allotment and retribution on earth. On the ground of such a faith, so sustained, he appears always to anticipate with complacency the appointed removal to another scene, confident that he should continue to experience in another life the goodness of that Being who had been so favourable to him in this, "though without the smallest conceit," he says, "of meriting such goodness." The merely philosophic language uniformly employed in his repeated anticipations of an immortal life, taken together with two or three profane passages in these letters, (there are but few such passages*,) and with the manner in which he equivocates on the question respectfully pressed upon him by the worthy President of Yale College, respecting his opinion of Christ, leave no room to doubt that, whatever he did really think of the Divine Teacher, he substantially rejected Christianity—that he refused to acknowledge it in any thing like the character of a peculiar economy for the illumination and redemption of a fallen and guilty race. Nothing, probably, that he believed, was believed on the authority of its declarations, and nothing that he assumed to hope after death,

* One of the most prominent and offensive is in a very short letter (p. 115, 4to.) written when past eighty, on the occasion of the death of a person whom he calls "our poor friend Ben Kent." We were going to transcribe,—but it is better to leave such vile stuff where it is.

was expected on the ground of its redeeming efficacy and its promises. And this state of opinions it appears that he self-complacently maintained without variation, during the long course of his activities and speculations on the great scale; for in this letter to Dr. Stiles, of the date of 1790, he enclosed, as expressive of his latest opinions, one written nearly forty years before, in answer to some religious admonitions addressed to him by George Whitfield. So that, throughout a period much surpassing the average duration of the life of man, spent in a vigorous and very diversified exercise of an eminently acute and independent intellect, with all the lights of the world around him, he failed to attain the one grand simple apprehension how man is to be accepted with God. There is even cause to doubt whether he ever made the inquiry, with any real solicitude to meet impartially the claims of that religion which avows itself to be, on evidence, a declaration of the mind of the Almighty on the momentous subject. On any question of physics, or mechanics, or policy, or temporal utility of any kind, or morals as detached from religion, he could bend the whole force of his spirit, and the result was often a gratifying proof of the greatness of that force; but the religion of Christ it would appear that he could pass by with an easy assumption that whatever might be the truth concerning it, he could perfectly well do without it. To us this appears a mournful and awful spectacle; and the more so, from that entire unaffected tranquillity with which he regarded the whole concern in the conscious near approach of death. Some of the great Christian topics it was needless to busy himself about then, because he should soon learn the "truth with less trouble!"—We conclude by transcribing from the letter to Dr. Stiles the paragraph relating to the philosopher's religion.

"Here is my creed: I believe in one God, the creator of the universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion, and I regard them as you do, in whatever sect I meet with them. As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the system of morals and his religion as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is like to see, but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have with most of the present dissenters in England, some doubts as to his divinity; though it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having

never studied it, and think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an opportunity of knowing the truth with less trouble. I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that belief has the good consequence, as probably it has, of making his doctrines more respected and more observed, especially as I do not see that the Supreme takes it amiss by distinguishing the believers, in his government of the world, with any peculiar marks of his displeasure. I shall only add respecting myself, that having experienced the goodness of that Being in conducting me prosperously through a long life, I have no doubt of its continuance in the next, though without the smallest conceit of meriting such goodness."

X.

JAMES BEATTIE.

An Account of the Life and Writings of James Beattie, LL.D., late Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen; including many of his Original Letters. By SIR WILLIAM FORBES, of Pitsligo, Bart.

WHEN a man of humble condition and education who has cultivated literature under the pressure of many disadvantages, and perhaps distresses, comes before the public with a work which has cost him great labour, costs the purchaser but a moderate price, and communicates very necessary, or at least very useful and seasonable information, he may justly claim for the faults of his book the very last degree of forbearance which criticism can exercise, without surrendering its essential laws. But when a man of fortune, who had a liberal education, who has been intimate with many of the most distinguished individuals, both in literature and rank, for forty years, who would indignantly disown any wish to raise money on the grave of his friend, who knows that an ample memoir of that friend has already been given to the public, and who adopts the easiest of all possible modes of making up volumes, publishes a splendid work, he will naturally disdain to be under any obligation to the clemency of critics. We shall therefore feel perfectly at liberty to express our honest opinion on these volumes; and laying out of the question all the excellencies which the author doubtless possesses, we shall consider him simply in the character which he has assumed in appearing before the public.

We cannot but earnestly wish that the present epidemical disease in literature, the custom of making very large books about individuals, may in due time find, like other diseases, some limit to its prevalence, and at length decline and disappear. What is to become of readers, if the exit of every

man of some literary eminence is thus to be followed by a long array of publications, beginning with duodecimos, extending into octavos, and expanded at last into a battalion of magnificent quartos? This is reviving to some purpose the Theban method of attacking in the form of a wedge; and we do hope the curiosity, diligence, and patience of readers will at last be completely put to the rout.

This swelling fungous kind of biography confounds all the right proportions in which the claims and the importance of individuals should be arranged, and exhibited to the attention of the public. When a private person, whose life was marked by few striking varieties, is thus brought forward in two volumes quarto, while many an individual of modern times, who influenced the fate of nations, has been confined to a sixth part of the compass, it reminds us too much of that political rule by which Old Sarum, consisting of one house, is represented by two illustrious senators, while many very populous towns are not represented at all. If a professor of a college is to lie thus magnificently in state, what must be done for such a man as Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox? And still more, what must be done after the exit of some persons who are at present acting their part in human affairs? The French *Encyclopedie* will be, in point of bulk, but a horn-book in comparison of the stupendous host of folios, which must come forth after the departure of Bonaparte and Talleyrand; provided, that is to say, that sufficient materials, in the way of paper, ink, &c., can then be obtained wherewithal to furnish out this mighty blazon of monumental history. And by the way, the makers of paper will do well to take the hint from us, and have their warehouses ready for the event which will happen sooner or later in *their* favour, though to the confusion and dismay of the most courageous and indefatigable *readers*. As to *reviewers*, the most industrious and incorruptible of all the servants of the public, they will then have the plea of absolute necessity for resorting to the practice of which they have sometimes been most unrighteously accused, that of reviewing books without inspecting them.

The method of constructing large biographical works out of an assemblage of letters, with here and there a page and paragraph between, for the purpose of connexion and explanation, has plenty of plausible recommendations. There is an appearance of great modesty; the compiler makes no

claims to the honours of authorship ; all he is anxious for, is to display in the simplest manner, the merits, talents, and pursuits of his friend. That friend is thus made to present himself to us in his own person, and his familiar correspondence will disclose to us the internal qualities of the man incomparably better, as it is so often repeated to us, than any formal development of a biographer. The series of such letters, continued through half the length of life or more, will show the gradual progress and improvement of the mind. If some of them are trivial or common, in subject or style, even the smallest things said and written by eminent persons have their value ; it is pleasing to observe how great minds sometimes unbend ; and consoling to see in how many respects they are like ourselves. These are recommendations proper to be mentioned to the public ; but there are others of which the biographer can silently take the advantage to himself, besides that extreme facility of performance which we have hinted already. One of these is impunity. There is little to be attacked in such a book, except what its author has *not* written ; or if *he* is directly censured for introducing some of the things written by the person who is the subject of the book, the partiality of friendship is a plea always at hand, and a feeling always accounted amiable. Another is a fair opportunity for the biographer to introduce *himself* very often, and without the direct form of egotism ; since the probability is, that not a few of the letters were written to him, and contain of course, many very handsome things. His modesty professes to hesitate about their insertion ; but yet they must be inserted, because they show in so striking a light, the kind disposition of his friend.

Such handsome things, we have no doubt, were amply deserved by Sir W. Forbes, and even those more than handsome things which he informs us he has omitted in printing the letters. The indications of a sincere affection for Dr. Beattie, are very conspicuous ; and we attribute it to a real partiality of friendship, that he has made this work much larger than we think can be of service to the instruction of the public, or the memory of his friend. The memory of that friend was unquestionably too dear to him to have permitted the insertion of one letter or line, which he did not sincerely believe would give the same impression of the writer, which Sir William himself was happy to cherish. It is there-

fore unfortunate, that the reader should feel, at the close of the book, that he would have been more pleased with both Dr. Beattie and his biographer, if it had come to a close much sooner.

The parts written by Sir W. Forbes, are in a style, perspicuous, correct, and classical; generally relating however to particulars, which required no great effort of thought. Many of these particulars are most unnecessarily introduced, and lead into details which are extremely tiresome, not excepting even the analysis of Dr. Beattie's writings. It had surely been enough to have stated in a few sentences, the objects of his several performances, and then, if the reader deemed those objects of importance, he would take an opportunity of consulting the books themselves. The notes contain a large assemblage of biographical and genealogical records. When a new acquaintance of Dr. Beattie is mentioned, it is deemed proper for us to be informed of his parentage, his connexions, his residence, his offices, his accomplishments. In several instances a letter of little interest is preceded by a long history of still less, for the purpose of making that letter intelligible, by detailing some transaction to which it relates; as in that part of the book referring to the union of two colleges in Aberdeen. Sir William is sufficiently a citizen of the world, we have no doubt, to wish his book may be read in each part of the kingdom; why was he not enough a citizen of the world, to be aware how small a portion of the kingdom can feel any concern in this piece of history? If he thought all these matters would magnify the importance of his principal subject, he is so far mistaken, that the reader is tempted to quarrel with that subject, on account of this crowd of appendages. The reader feels in this case, just as Sir William would do, if some one of his friends of high rank, whom he would be very glad to receive in an easy quiet way, would never come to visit him for a day or two, without bringing also a large troop of footmen, postillions, cooks, nursery-maids, and other inhabitants of his house, kitchen, and stables. We *will* not suppose it was his formal purpose to make a very large book. Nor could it be his ambition to display writing talents, as the subjects would have been unfortunately selected for such a purpose; and indeed we do not accuse him of ostentation as an author. Perhaps it is no great vice if he exhibits a little of it as a man. But

we have felt a degree of surprise that he should not seem to be aware of the impression which would be made on the minds of his readers, by his adding, at the end of almost every note relating to one or another distinguished personage of Dr. Beattie's acquaintance, "And I also had the honour of his friendship." This occurs so often, that we have felt that kind of irritation which is excited when a man, that we wish to respect, is for the tenth or twentieth time doing or repeating a foolish thing in order to intimate his importance. We persuade ourselves that this feeling arises from our right perception of what would have preserved Sir William's dignity; perhaps however we deceive ourselves, and the feeling springs from envy of his high fortune, for we doubt if we were ever summoned to wait on a man of such extensive and illustrious connexions before.

Previously to the insertion of any of Dr. Beattie's letters, a succinct account is given of his life, from his birth, of humble, but very respectable parents, till his twenty-fifth year, when he was appointed professor of moral philosophy and logic, in Marischal college, after having passed through the offices of parish-clerk and schoolmaster in the neighbourhood of his native place, and assistant in a respectable school in Aberdeen. This rapid advancement, by means of merit alone, is in itself sufficient to evince both uncommon ability and industry. We are informed that the passion and the talent for poetry were very early awakened in his mind, and in one of his letters to a friend, in a later period of his life, he acknowledges that his "Minstrel" is substantially a description of what had been his own mental character in his youth. A prematurity of faculties appears conspicuous through the whole course of his earlier life, and when he was fixed at Aberdeen, those faculties were extended to the utmost, in the society of a number of distinguished men, such as Campbell, Reid, Gerard, Gregory, and many others, with whom he familiarly associated, and from that time maintained an intimate friendship as long as the respective parties lived. An entertaining account is given of these literary friends forming themselves into a society for philosophical discussion, to which the common people gave the denomination of the Wise Club, in which the first ideas were started of some of those theories which were afterwards unfolded at large, in books that have obtained a high rank in the philosophic

school. It is pleasing to observe, that the friendship among these scholars and philosophers was very cordial, and not withered by that envy and jealousy which the philosophic character has often enough failed to preclude, when rival talents have created a comparison and balance of reputation. Dr. Beattie retained his station at Aberdeen all the rest of his life, which was diversified only by his family connexions and cares, his publications, his friendships, and his occasional visits to London. A piece of information is now and then interposed by the biographer ; but these circumstances are chiefly unfolded in Dr. Beattie's correspondence with Dr. Blacklock, Sir W. Forbes, Mr. Arbuthnot, Mrs. Montague, the Bishop of London, the Duchess of Gordon, and several other friends.

From the time of Beattie's establishment at Aberdeen, till within a few years of the end of his life, a period of forty years, he prosecuted study and the business of authorship with indefatigable industry and ardour. And in passing along the series of letters, our admiration is repeatedly excited by the variety of attainments, the extent of accurate reading, and the quantity of composition, for which he was able to rescue time enough from his professional employments, wide correspondence, intercourse with society, and domestic sorrows. A more instructive example is not often displayed of what resolute application may accomplish, when supported by a very warm interest in the business in which it is exerted. But at the same time a warm passion for literature, especially when a man writes, as well as reads, is apt to produce a species of extravagance, which, to people who are not in the same employment, appears excessively ludicrous. A cork-cutter, or a maker of nails, or pins, or pegs for shoes, who quietly betakes himself to his work every morning, and goes soberly through it as a matter of course, would be first surprised, and next diverted to laughter, to see the importance, and earnestness, and solemnity, put on by an author and a poet, while occupied about the making of a line, the adjusting of a syllable, the changing of an epithet, the measuring of dactyls, or the lengthening or shortening of a paragraph ; and by the self-complacency, the air of high achievement, and the congratulations of scholars, when he has performed this great duty well. Even the detail of the graver and more philosophic labours of writing cannot be listened to long, when the writers are to give the

account of them, without the loss of gravity ; though it is true that the gravity which is lost in laughing, may be quickly resumed for censuring.

The letters of authors, from Pope's time down to the present instance, betray them to this ridicule and this censure. There is no end of the amplifications and repetitions about my book, my poems, my ode, my epigram, my translations, my corrections, my new edition, my next production.—I have taken great pains to amend the harshness of the tenth or fifteenth line ; I have excluded one stanza, and inserted two ; I flatter myself that the objection which has been made to it by the public will now be obviated ; I have been particularly struck with a coincidence between a passage in my essay, and one in Mr. —'s treatise ; I can prove that mine was not borrowed ; I have written twenty pages of a dissertation on the subject we were lately conversing upon ; you know I do not think highly of my own talents ; I am inclined to think this will be a decisive performance, however ; my last work is getting much into vogue, as I am informed.—I hear the critics are at work ; I defy them ; your approbation would sustain my self-complacency, if they were all to condemn me ; Mr. — is very angry, but I think he will not attack ; the work has produced a great sensation ; I am told that Dr. E., and Bishop F., and Lord G. are delighted with it ; I have just received a letter from Lady H., who pays me such compliments as I will not repeat to you ; she tells me that Mr. J. is wonderfully pleased and is very anxious to see me, &c. &c.

If authors may be allowed to expatiate on these matters, and in this manner, in their communications with their intimate literary friends, the letters ought, for the sake of the respectability of the writers, to be confined to those friends alone. Should there be any exception, it would be in the instance where some important principle of criticism is discussed in immediate connexion with any articles of the author's own performances, so that his remarks respecting his compositions, shall become instructive lessons on the art of composition in general. But this is rarely the case in those parts of the letters before us, which are occupied with a multitude of minutiae about the writer's own studies. We therefore think, that many of these letters convict Sir W. Forbes of utterly mistaking the proper method of recalling his departed friend, with dignity, into the public consideration.

The first publication of Dr. Beattie was a volume of juvenile poems, in a new edition of which he omitted several pieces which his biographer regrets to lose ; especially a long Ode to Peace, which is inserted in the appendix to the present work. We think that Dr. Beattie showed more discernment in wishing to let it sink in oblivion, than Sir William in fishing it up again. The term Chaos occurs in the first stanza, and would have been a singularly appropriate title for the whole ode. It is not a *description* of chaos, but the very thing itself ; a mass of ill-defined and enormous images ; a confusion of crude elements, dashing, rumbling, howling, and fighting all in the dark.

The "Minstrel" is the production of a maturer age, and will always be read with delight, by persons endowed with a taste for nature, with tenderness of feeling, and elevated imagination. The alleged deficiency of incident would hardly appear to us a fault, in any work so rich in refined sentiment and beautiful description.

An ample portion of the first volume is occupied with the project, the completion, the publication, and the success, of the "Essay on Truth." This is no place for the examination of the principles of that celebrated book, which, beyond all doubt, was written with the worthiest intention, and was of considerable use at the time, in exposing some of the most obvious extravagances of the sceptical philosophy, which was carried to the very limit of sense by Mr. Hume, and pushed beyond it into the most ridiculous folly, by some of his weak admirers and wicked followers. The book will be an acceptable resting-place to those who are averse to the labour of abstract thinking, and an asylum to those who are terrified by the consequences sometimes seen to result from attempting to prosecute such thinking beyond the power and reach of the human faculties. But we cannot expect that philosophers will ever be satisfied with this doctrine of common sense. They will, we think justly, assert that there is no boundary which can fairly limit and close the investigation of truth on this side the region of metaphysics. The ultimate principles must be there, whether they can be found there or not ; and thither the investigation will absolutely go, in spite of every contrivance to satisfy and determine it at any nearer point. How far it shall go into that world of abstraction, before its progress shall be stopped by humility or despair, will depend

on the *strength* of a merely philosophic mind, and on the *discretion* of a pious one.

The author's expectations of the success of his essay were not sanguine, and therefore surprise heightened his satisfaction when it was received, if many of these letters do not exaggerate, with such delight, as if Christianity and true philosophy had been waiting, in the awful crisis of existence or extinction, for its appearance. It seems to have been welcomed like a convoy of provisions in a famishing garrison, by many high characters in church and state, whose exultation would really seem to betray the impression which their talents had not prevented Mr. Hume from making on their fears. The most flattering attentions thickened on Dr. Beattie within the circle of his personal acquaintance; and he received from England many letters abounding with expressions of admiration and offers of friendship, on the strength of which he was induced to make a visit to London. At this period of the history, he is presented to us in a different point of view from that of the scholar, poet, and philosopher. We are fairly told, though with much care to qualify the homeliness of the confession, that it was needful to Dr. Beattie to *eat*, which we have often had occasion to be sorry that philosophers, including reviewers, should be under the necessity of doing. The means of subsistence for himself and family were confined to the small stipend of his professorship, and the emolument that might accrue from his publications; of which he received a comfortable sample and assurance in the fifty guineas paid him for his "Essay on Truth," which had only cost him the labour of four years. His many generous and opulent friends in Scotland and England were aware of his circumstances, and sincerely regretted them. A comparatively small annual sum would have given a man of his moderate wants and habits, the feeling of independence; and a strong and concurrent sentiment of anxiety was awakened, in the minds of a greater number of noblemen and gentlemen than we can charge our memories with, to find out any means of obtaining for him this advantage. They lamented the duty, imposed on them by their high rank, of expending so many thousands on their splendid establishments and their hounds; while the illustrious defender of truth, and their dear friend, was in danger of something bordering on indigence. But notwithstanding these unavoidable necessities of their own condition, they would have been most

happy to have made some effort in his favour, had not a fatal obstacle stood in the way. That obstacle was delicacy; it might hurt his feelings to insinuate to him the offer of any thing which they themselves regarded with such a generous scorn as money. With sincere sorrow therefore, they were reduced to wait, and see what fortune might do for him. At last Mrs. Montague, much to her shame, violated this delicacy by informing him, that she would take upon herself to mend his condition, if a slight expectation which had begun to spring up from another quarter, should fail to be realized. This expectation was realized not long after, and his illustrious friends rejoiced in the double good fortune, that *their delicacy* was saved, and *his* purse was filled. Sir W. Forbes, one of those friends, and an opulent banker in Edinburgh, records this whole affair in the most honest simplicity of heart, just as we have done ourselves.

This brings us, as we conceive, to the middle of our song.

Now heavily comes on in clouds the day,
The great, th' important day, big with the fate——

But it was a much better fate than that of our old friend Cato. After many preparatory solemnities, Dr. Beattie was introduced to their Majesties; but a reverential awe forbids us to intrude our remarks on what passed in the royal sanctuary. We wait near the entrance till the bold adventurer returns, to display his acquisitions and his honours, a kind of *spolia opima*, similar to what Johnson, another great literary hero, had carried off sometime before, and often, as his historian tells, triumphantly exhibited to the wonder and envy of his numerous acquaintance. At Dr. Beattie's return, however, we find him so beset with a crowd and mob of zealous friends, that we are glad to make our escape from the bustle, and can only say, that at length he went back to Scotland with an annuity of £200. Highly appreciating the royal bounty, he ever afterwards testified the liveliest gratitude; and his attachment was naturally increased by the very flattering marks of friendship which he received from their Majesties on subsequent occasions.

During this visit he was introduced to the distinguished persons whose letters are here intermixed with his own. Our remarks on the whole collection must be brief and general. Together with a great deal that ought to have been omitted,

as neither having any intrinsic value, nor supplying any additional illustration of the Doctor's qualities, they contain much good sense, easy writing, and frank disclosure of character. There is also a respectable share of true criticism; but we own there are not many passages that appear to us to reach the depths of either criticism or philosophy, which indeed are the same. The variety of the descriptions generally bears the marks of the poet and the man of taste. The references to subjects of domestic tenderness present him in so amiable a light that we deeply sympathize with the melancholy which accompanied every recollection of the state of his family; and it must have been inevitable to a man like him, to have that recollection almost continually in his mind. The direct allusions, however, are not often repeated, and with much propriety Sir William has no doubt omitted many paragraphs relating to the subject.

Dr. Beattie's style is singularly free and perspicuous, and adapted in the highest degree to the purpose of familiar lecturing to his pupils; but for an author, we should deem it something less than elegant, and something less than nervous. In early life he took great pains to imitate Addison, whose style he always recommended and admired. But Addison's style is not sufficiently close and firm for the use of a philosopher, and as to the exquisite shades of his colours, they can perhaps never be successfully imitated. We were rather surprised to find the enthusiastic admirer of Addison preferring the old Scotch version of the Psalms to every other; and the opinion of so respectable a judge put our national partialities in some degree of fear. But we soon recovered our complacency in our own venerable Sternhold and Hopkins, who, in point of harmony and elegance, richness and majesty, and all the other high attributes of poetry, have surely beaten their northern rivals.

In many parts of the letters we are constrained to perceive a degree of egotism inconsistent with the dignity of a philosopher or a man. The writer seems unwilling to lose any opportunity of recounting the attentions, the compliments, the testimonies of admiration, which he has received from individuals or the public. The complacency with which he expatiates on himself and his performances, is but imperfectly disguised by the occasional and too frequent professions of holding himself and those performances cheap. This is a very usual but unsuccessful expedient, with those who have reflection enough

to be sensible that they have rather too much ostentation, but not resolution enough to restrain themselves from indulging in it. It will unluckily happen sometimes, that these professions of self-disesteem will be brought into direct contrast with certain things that betray a very different feeling. There is an instance of this in the second volume, p. 173, where the expression, "you have paid too much attention to my foolish remarks," is printed in the same page with this other expression, "poor Mr. Locke."

Another conspicuous feature of this correspondence, is the gross flattery interchanged between Dr. Beattie and his friends. The reader is sometimes tempted to suspect, that he has been called to be present at a farce where the principal persons are flattering for a wager. During the perusal we have been obliged again and again to endeavour to drive out of our imagination the idea of a meeting of friends in China, where the first mandarin bows to the floor, and then the second mandarin bows to the floor, and then the first mandarin bows again to the floor, and thus they go on till friendship is satisfied or patience tired. In his letters to one individual, a Duchess, the Doctor felt it his duty to take notice of person as well as abilities and virtues. But we should conclude that all the other gentlemen of her acquaintance must have been very sparing of compliments to her beauty, if she could be gratified by such as those of the professor.

If it is *not* gross flattery that abounds in these letters, we have the more cause to be sorry for having come into the world some years later than Dr. Beattie and Sir W. Forbes. There have been better times than the present, if during the main part of this correspondence, every gentleman was an accomplished scholar, every person of opulence and power was humble and charitable, and every prelate an apostle. Astræa must have left the earth much later than report has commonly given out.

The letters of the Doctor's friends constitute the smaller, yet a considerable proportion of the series. Those of Mrs. Montague are greatly superior to the rest, and excel in some respects those of Dr. Beattie himself. The general praise of good language is due to the whole collection. It may appear a caprice of our taste, to dislike the frequent recurrence of the words *credit* and *creditable*. "Highly creditable to his understanding and his heart," "does equal credit to his talents and

his character," &c., &c., are phrases returning so often, that they become disagreeable intruders on the eye and the ear. The sameness of phrase is however strikingly relieved by novelty of application, in a letter of condolence from a learned prelate to Dr. Beattie, after the death of his second son. Vol. II., p. 309. The mourning father is told that, "The faith, the piety, the fortitude displayed by so young a man, on so awful an occasion, do infinite *credit* to him." As if dying were a matter of exhibition to be performed handsomely to please the spectators.

Among the sensible and entertaining pieces of criticism to be found in the Doctor's letters, we might refer to his observations on the novel of *Clarissa*, Ossian's Poems, the *Nouvelle Eloise*, *Metastasio*, *Tasso*, *Cæsar's Commentaries*, the diction of the *Orientalists*, and the *Henriade*. In connexion with the subjects of criticism, are the curious remarks on the character of *Petrarch*, and the truly fantastic picture of *Lord Monboddo*. A selection of about one-third of the materials composing these volumes, would make a very interesting and instructive book.

Though we have complained of the mass of extraneous matter, yet some of the facts incidentally related, are such as ought not to have been lost. The account of the excellent lady, whose husband, with all his property, perished at sea, and who was niece to the once celebrated *Mrs. Catharine Cockburn*, would be very interesting, were we not convinced, from the internal evidence, that it is most incorrectly stated. According to this account she lived, till that late period when *Mrs. Montague* settled on her an annuity for the short remainder of her life, in great penury; insomuch that it was a matter of wonder how she contrived to preserve a tolerable appearance in respect of clothing. Now this must be an utter mistake or misrepresentation, for we are told that she was well-known to many persons of eminent rank, and in particular was highly esteemed by the *Duchess of Gordon*, the possessor, as we learn from *Dr. Beattie*, of every beneficent virtue, as well as every charm, under heaven. The transport of surprise and gratitude displayed by the aged sufferer, on being informed what *Mrs. Montague* had done, and which the narrative of *Dr. Beattie* and *Sir W. Forbes* would really leave us to attribute to her having never experienced much bounty before, was owing unquestionably to a very different cause. It was her benevolent

joy that a part of the ample supplies which she had received from her former munificent patrons and patronesses, and especially the Duchess, might now be applied to the support of other deserving persons in distress. While remarking on the error of the statement, it strikes us as equally singular and meritorious, that *we*, who were never honoured with a smile or a nod from a peer or peeress,—that we, in our obscure garrets, labouring at our occupation during the day by the few glimpses of light that can steal through windows almost stopped up with old hats and bits of board to keep out the rain, and during the night by the lustre of farthing candles,—should be more solicitous about the reputation of people of high rank, than Sir W. Forbes, the intimate friend of so many of them, appears in this instance to have been. We hope that this our virtue, in default of other recompense, will be its own reward; and we trust it will be a pledge, that, whatever culpable dispositions may belong to reviewers, they feel no inclination to speak evil of dignities.

We could have wished to entertain an unmingled respect for the moral habits and religious views of Dr. Beattie; and it is an ungracious thing to detect any signs of a moral latitude inconsistent with the religion which he wished to defend. One of these signs is his passion for the theatre. Who would ever dream, on reading the following passage, that it could have been written by a zealous friend of the religion of Christ?

“ I rejoice to hear that Mr. Garrick is so well as to be able to appear in tragedy. It is in vain to indulge one's self in unavailing complaints, otherwise I could rail by the hour at Dame Fortune, for placing me beyond the reach of that arch-magician, as Horace would have called him. I well remember, and I think I can never forget, how he once affected me in Macbeth, and made me almost throw myself over the front seat of the two-shilling gallery. I wish I had another opportunity of risking my neck and nerves in the same cause. To fall by the hands of Garrick and Shakespeare, would ennoble my memory to all generations. To be serious, if all actors were like this one, I do not think it would be possible for a person of sensibility to outlive the representation of Hamlet, Lear, or Macbeth; which, by the by, seems to suggest a reason for that mixture of comedy and tragedy of which our great poet was so fond, and which the Frenchified critics think such an intolerable outrage both against nature and decency. Against nature, it is no outrage at all; the inferior officers of a court know very little of what passes among kings and statesmen; and may be very merry, when their superiors are very sad; and if so, the porter's soliloquy in Macbeth may be a very just imitation of nature. And I can never accuse of indelicacy the man, who, by the introduction of a little unexpected merriment, saves me from a disordered head, or a broken

heart. If Shakspeare knew his own powers, he must have seen the necessity of tempering his tragic rage by a mixture of comic ridicule ; otherwise there was some danger of his running into greater excesses than deer-stealing, by sporting with the lives of all the people of taste in these realms. Other play-wrights must conduct their approaches to the human heart with the utmost circumspection, a single false step may make them lose a great deal of ground ; but Shakspeare made his way to it at once, and could make his audience burst their sides this moment, and break their hearts the next. I have often seen Hamlet performed by the underlings of the theatre, but none of these seemed to understand what they were about. Hamlet's character, though perfectly natural, is so very uncommon, that few, even of our critics, can enter into it. Sorrow, indignation, revenge, and consciousness of his own irresolution, tear his heart ; the peculiarity of his circumstances often obliges him to counterfeit madness, and the storm of passions within him often drives him to the verge of real madness. This produces a situation so interesting, and a conduct so complicated, as none but Shakspeare could have had the courage to describe, and none but Garrick will ever be able to exhibit. Excuse this rambling ; I know you like the subject ; and for my part I like it so much, that when I once get in, I am not willing to find my way out of it."—Vol. I. pp. 218—220.

We may also be allowed to ask, how it consisted with that full approbation which he uniformly avowed of the established church of England, to spend the Sabbath in a convivial party with Sir J. Reynolds, Baretti, and other persons, some of whom would most likely have laughed at him, had he hinted any recollection of the duty of public worship ? This was not a singular offence with him.

Religious opinions, in the strict sense, are scarcely disclosed in any part of the work, except occasionally by implication, as in the following sentence : " The virtue of even the best man must, in order to appear meritorious at the great tribunal, have something added to it which man cannot bestow." We were sincerely grieved to meet with so grand a mistake of the nature of Christianity. On the whole, we fear Dr. Beattie conformed in his moral principles too much to the fashion of reputable men of the world, and in his religious ones too much to the fashion of scholars and philosophers. This fear was in no degree obviated, by our finding the first of his precepts to a young minister of the gospel to be exactly this, " Read the classics day and night." We are forcibly reminded, by contrast, of the injunctions given to Timothy, by the prince of the apostles.

We question, too, whether the Doctor, in another instance, acquitted himself very uprightly as a " soul-doctor," (for thus he terms himself ;) we refer to his prescription for a noble

Duchess, whose name occurs very often within these pages. There was a period, we find, when that lady was disposed to solitude and reflection; one of those awful periods at which the destiny of an individual seems oscillating in suspense, and a small influence of advice, or circumstance, has the power to decide it. How Dr. Beattie used this entrusted moment, may be seen from the following admonitions :

“Seasons of recollection may be useful; but when one begins to find pleasure in sighing over Young’s ‘Night Thoughts’ in a corner, it is time to shut the book, and return to the company. . . . Such things may help to soften a rugged mind; and I believe I might have been the better for them. But your Grace’s heart is already ‘too feelingly alive to each fine impulse;’ and, therefore, to you I would recommend gay thoughts, cheerful books, and sprightly company.”—Vol. II. pp. 28, 29.

We are doubtful which most to admire, the rigid friendship of the adviser, or the notorious docility of the pupil; the degree in which they both exemplify the predominance of a devotional spirit, appears to be nearly equal.

Here our remarks must be concluded. The closing part of Dr. Beattie’s life is as affecting as any tragedy we ever read, and will appeal irresistibly to the sympathy of every reader who can reflect or feel. His health had been ruined by intense study, and the hopeless grief arising from the circumstance already mentioned. Under the loss of his nearest relative by what was far worse than her death, his eldest son, an admirable youth, became the object of unbounded affection. At the age of twenty-two he died. A few years after, his remaining son, not equally interesting with the other, but yet an excellent young man, died also. The afflicted parent manifested a resignation to the divine will which cannot be surpassed. But nature sunk by degrees into a state, from which his friends could not but congratulate his deliverance by death.

XI.

FASHIONABLE LIFE.

Tales of Fashionable Life. By MISS EDGEWORTH, Author of Practical Education, Belinda, &c.

ON the supposition, or the chance, that any small number of our readers may not have taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with the distinguishing qualities of the productions of a writer, who has already contributed the amount of more than twenty volumes to the otherwise scanty stock of our literature,—and, if we may judge from the short interval between the works in the latter part of the series, is likely at the very least, to double the number,—it may not be amiss to set down a very few observations, suggested chiefly by the perusal of one portion of her performances, though it belongs by its form to a department over which we do not pretend any right of habitual censorship.

It is evident this writer has a much higher object than merely to amuse. Being very seriously of opinion that mankind want mending, and that she is in possession of one of the most efficacious arts for such a purpose, she has set about the operation in good earnest. But when any machine, material or moral, is wrong, there are a few very obvious prerequisites to the attempt to set it right. The person that undertakes it should know what the machine was designed for ; should perceive exactly what part of its present action is defective or mischievous ; should discern the cause of this disordered effect ; and, for the choice of the implements and method of correction, should have the certainty of the adept, instead of the guesses of the tampering experimenter, or the downright hardness of ignorant presumption. When the disordered subject to be operated on is a thing of no less importance than human nature, it should seem that these prerequisites are peculiarly indispensable ; and the existence ought to be inferrible from

the operator's boldness, if we see him putting to the work so confident a hand as that of our author. A hand more confident, apparently, has very seldom been applied to the business of moral correction ; and that business is prosecuted in a manner so little implying, on the part of our author, any acknowledgment that she is working on a subordinate ground, and according to the lowest class of the principles of moral discipline,—and therefore so little hinting even the existence of any more elevated and authoritative principles,—that she is placed within the cognizance of a much graver sort of criticism than would at first view appear applicable to a writer of tales. She virtually takes her rank among the teachers who profess to exhibit the comprehensive theory of duty and happiness. She would be considered as undertaking the treatment of what is the most serious and lamentable, as well as what is most light and ridiculous, in human perversity ; and according to a method which at all events cannot be exceeded in *soundness*, however it may prove in point of efficacy.

Now when we advert to the prerequisites for such an undertaking, we cannot repress the suspicion that our author is unqualified for it. It is a grand point of incompetency if she is totally ignorant what the human race exists for. And there appears nothing in the present, or such other of her works as we have happened to look into, to prevent the surmise, that this question would completely baffle her. Reduce her to say what human creatures were made for, and there would be an end of her volubility. Whether our species were intended as an exhibition for the amusement of some superior, invisible, and malignant intelligences ; or were sent here to expiate the crimes of some pre-existent state ; or were made for the purpose, as some philosophers will have it and phrase it, of *developing the faculties of the earth*, that is to say, managing its vegetable produce, extracting the wealth of its mines, and the like ; or were merely a contrivance for giving to a certain number of atoms the privilege of being, for a few years, the constituent particles of warm upright living figures ;—whether they are appointed to any future state of sentiment or rational existence ;—whether, if so, it is to be one fixed state, or a series of transmigrations ; a higher or lower state than the present ; a state of retribution, or bearing no relation to moral qualities ;—whether there be any Supreme Power, that presides over the succession and condition of the race, and will see to their

ultimate destination,—or, in short, whether there be any design, contrivance, or intelligent destination in the whole affair, or the fact be not rather, that the species, with all its present circumstances, and whatever is to become of it hereafter, is the production and sport of chance,—all these questions are probably undecided in the mind of our ingenious moralist. And how can she be qualified to conduct the discipline of a kind of beings of the nature and relations of which she is so profoundly ignorant? If it were not a serious thing on account of its presumption, would it not be an incomparably ludicrous one on account of its absurdity, that a popular instructor should be most busily enforcing a set of principles of action—not as confessedly superficial and occasional, and merely subservient to a specific purpose, but as fundamental and comprehensive—while that instructor does not know whether the creatures, whose characters are attempted to be formed on those principles, are bound or not by the laws of a Supreme Governor, nor whether they are to be affected by the right or wrong of moral principles for only a few times twelve months, or to all eternity?—Here an admirer of Miss Edgeworth's moral philosophy might be expected to say, "But why may not our professor be allowed to set these considerations out of the question; since many things in the theory of morals are very clear and very important independently of them? Integrity, prudence, industry, generosity, and good manners, can be shown to be vitally connected with our immediate interests, and powerfully enforced on that ground, whether there be or be not a Supreme Governor and Judge, and a future life; and why may not our instructor hold this ground, exempt from the interference of theology? What we see we know: we can actually survey the whole scope of what you call the *present* life of human creatures, and can discern how its happiness is affected by the virtues and vices which our professor so forcibly illustrates: and why may it not be a very useful employment to teach the art of happiness *thus far*, whatever may ultimately be found to be the truth or error of the speculations on invisible beings and future existences?"

To this the obvious reply would be, first—in terms of identical import with those we have already used—that the ingenious preceptress does not give her pupils the slightest word of warning, that it is *possible* their moral interests may be of an extent infinitely beyond anything she takes into account: that if the

case is so, her philosophy, however useful to a certain length, in a particular way, cannot but be infinitely inadequate as a disciplinary provision for their *entire* interests ; and that, therefore, in consideration of such a possibility, it is their serious duty to inquire how much more it may be indispensable to learn, than she ever professes to teach them. She does not tell them, and would deem it excessively officious and fanatical in any one that should do it for her, that if there be any truth—nay, if there be the bare *possibility* of truth—in what religionists believe and teach—a philosopher like her cannot be admitted as competent to contribute to the happiness of mankind, in a much higher capacity than the persons that make clothes and furnish houses. She may not, in so many words, assert it would be idle or delusive to think of proposing any superior and more remotely prospective system of moral principles : but all appearances are carefully kept up to the point of implying as much ; and we apprehend she would be diverted, or would be fretted, just as the mood of her mind happened at the moment to be, to hear a sensible person, after reading her volumes, say,—“very just, very instructive, on a narrow and vulgar ground of moral calculation ; it is well fitted to make me a reputable sort of a man, and not altogether useless, during a few changes of the moon : if I were sure of ending after a few of those changes, in nothing but a clod, I do not know that I should want anything beyond the lessons of this philosopher’s school : but while I believe there is even a chance of a higher destiny, it is an obvious dictate of common sense, that it cannot be safe, and that it would be degrading, to attempt to satisfy myself with a little low scheme of morality, adapted to nothing in existence beyond the mere *convenience* of some score or two of years, more or less.” Our first censure is, then, that, setting up for a moral guide, our author does not pointedly state to her followers, that as it is but a very short stage she can pretend to conduct them, they had need—if they suspect they shall be obliged to go further—to be looking out, even in the very beginning of this short stage in which she accompanies them, for other guides to undertake for their safety in the remoter region. She presents herself with the air and tone of a person who would sneer or spurn at the apprehensive insinuated inquiry, whether any change or addition of guides might eventually become necessary.

But, secondly, our author’s moral system—on the hypothe-

sis of the truth, or possible truth, of revelation—is not only infinitely deficient, as being calculated to subserve the interests of the human creatures only to so very short a distance, while yet it carefully keeps out of sight all that may be beyond; it is also—still on the same hypothesis—perniciously erroneous as far as it goes. For it teaches virtue on principles on which virtue itself will not be approved by the Supreme Governor; and it avowedly encourages some dispositions, and directly or by implication tolerates others, which in the judgment of that Governor are absolutely vicious. As to the unsound quality of the virtue here taught, it would be quite enough to observe, that it bears no reference whatever to the will and laws of a superior Being. It is careless, whether there is such a Being,—whether, if there be, men are accountable to him, or not,—whether he has appointed laws,—whether he can enforce them,—whether he can punish the refusal to obey them. In short, it is a virtue that would *not be practised for his sake*; which is to be practised solely under the influence of other considerations; and which would be, at the dictate of those considerations, varied to any extent from any standard alleged to bear his authority. It is really superfluous to say that, on the religious hypothesis, such a virtue is utterly spurious, and partakes radically of the worst principles of vice. It is, besides, unstable in all its laws, as being founded on a combination of principles undefined, arbitrary, capricious, and sometimes incompatible.—Pride, honour, generous impulse, calculation of temporal advantage and custom of the country, are convened along with we know not how many other grave authorities, as the components of Miss Edgeworth's moral government—the Amphictyons of her legislative assembly. These authorities being themselves subject, singly or collectively, to no one paramount authority, may vary without end in their compromise with one another, and in their enactment of laws; so that by the time Miss Edgeworth comes to write her last volume in the concluding year of her life, she may chance to find it necessary—in maintaining a faithful adherence to them through all their caprices—to give the name of virtues to sundry things she now calls vices, and *vice versa*. There can be no decisive casuistry on the ground of such a system; and it would be easy to imagine situations in which the question of duty would, even under the present state of that

moral legislation which she enjoins us to revere, put her to as complete a nonplus as the question, "What was man made for?"—She is, however, dexterous enough, in general, to avoid such situations. It must be acknowledged, too, that perhaps the greater part of the moral practice which she sanctions, is, taken *merely* as practice, disconnected from all consideration of motives and opinions, substantially the same that the soundest moralist must inculcate,—unless his lectures could be allowed to be silent on the topics of justice in the transactions of business, the advantages of cultivating a habit of general kindness and liberality, exertions for amending the condition of the poor, patient firmness in the prosecution of good designs, with various other things of a character equally unequivocal. But there are some parts of her practical exhibitions unmarked with any note of disapprobation, where a Christian moralist would apply the most decided censure. She shows, for instance, a very great degree of tolerance for the dissipation of the wealthy classes, if it only stop short of utter frivolity or profligacy, and of ruinous expense. All the virtue she demands of them may easily comport with a prodigious quantity of fashion, and folly, and splendour, and profuseness. They may be allowed to whirl in amusements till they are dead sick, and then have recourse to a little sober useful goodness to recover themselves. They are indeed advised to cultivate their minds; but, as it should seem, for the purpose, mainly, of giving dignity to their rank, and zest and sparkle to the conversations of their idle and elegant parties. They are recommended to become the promoters of useful schemes in their neighbourhoods, and the patrons of the poor; but it does not appear that this philanthropy is required to be carried the length of costing any serious percentage on their incomes. The grand and ultimate object of all the intellectual and moral exertions to which our author is trying to coax and prompt them, is, confessedly,—self-complacency; and it is evident that, while surrounded incessantly with frivolous and selfish society to compare themselves with, they may assume this self-complacency on the strength of very middling attainments in wisdom and beneficence.

Another gross fault (on the supposition, still, that religion *may* chance to be more than an idle fancy) is our author's tolerance of profaneness. As to some of the instances of what every pious man would regard as profane expressions, either

absolutely or by the connexion in which they are put, she will say, perhaps, that they are introduced merely as a language appropriate to the characters ; and that those characters were never meant for patterns of excellence. This plea is of little validity for any narrator but the historian of real facts, who has but a partial option as to what he shall relate. In a merely literary court, indeed, it might go some length in defence of a fictitious writer ; but let religion be introduced among the judges in such a court, and the decision would be, that minute truth of fictitious representation involves no moral benefit adequate to compensate the mischief of familiarizing the reader's mind to language which associates the most solemn ideas with the most trifling or detestable. But this happens, in the present instance, to be a needless argument ; for the broadest and vilest piece of profaneness comes out in one of what are intended as the *finest* moments, of one of what are intended as the finest characters, in all these volumes. The character,—a spirited, generous, clever fellow, evidently a high favourite of our author,—is young Beaumont, in the tale entitled "*Manœuvring*," in the third volume ; the moment is when he is exulting (p. 78) at the news of a great naval victory, in which his most esteemed friend is supposed to have had a share.

We will only add, in order to get to the end of this homily of criticism, that our author's estimate of the evil of vice in general, excepting such vices as are glaringly marked with meanness or cruelty, appears to be exceedingly light in comparison with that which is taught in the school of revelation. And, consistently with this, the sentiments of penitential grief which she attributes to one of her principal characters, Lord Glenthorn, whom she reforms from a very great degree of profligacy, are wonderfully superficial and transient : nay, he is even made, in the commencement of his reformation, to reckon up the virtues of his past worthless and vicious life, with a self-complacency which far over-balanced his self-reproaches. And indeed those self-reproaches, when they were felt, had but extremely little of the quality of what, in Christian language, is meant by repentance : they are made to have expressed themselves much more in the manner of mortified pride. And this, again, is in perfect consistency with the motives to virtue on which the chief reliance appears to be placed throughout these volumes : for the most powerful

of those motives is pride. To manœuvre this passion in every mode which ingenuity can suggest; to ply it with every variety of stimulus, and contrive that at each step of vice something shall happen to mortify it,—if possible, according to the regular and natural course of cause and effect, if not, by some extraordinary occurrence, taking place at the will of the writer,—and that each step of virtue shall be attended by some circumstance signally gratifying to it,—this is the grand moral machinery of our moralist and reformer. And indeed what else could she do, or what better, after she had resolved that no part of her apparatus should be put in action by “the powers of the world to come?” For as to that intrinsic beauty of virtue which philosophers have pretended to descry and adore, *this* philosopher knew right well how likely it was that such a vision should disclose itself, with all its mystical fascinations, to the frequenters of ball-rooms and card-tables, of galas and operas, of gambling-houses and brothels.

Thus denied, by the quality of the subjects she has to work upon, the assistance of all that has been boasted by sages as the most refined and elevated in philosophy,—and by the limits of her creed, probably, as well as the disposition of her taste, the assistance of those principles professing to come from heaven, and which, whencesoever they have come, have formed the best and sublimest human characters that ever appeared on earth,—our moralist would be an object of much commiseration, if she did not manifest the most entire self-complacency. Yet it is but justice to say, that she does not attribute any miraculous power to those sordid moral principles, on the sole operation of which she is content to rest her hopes of human improvement. For on Lord Glenethorn, the hero of the longest and most interesting of these tales, she represents this operation as totally inefficacious till aided by the discovery that he is no Lord; having been substituted in his infancy for the true infant peer by Ellinor O'Donoghoe, the inhabitant of a dirty mud cabin, his mother, and that peer's nurse. And the subject which is thus made to illustrate the inefficacy is, notwithstanding, represented as naturally endowed with very favourable dispositions and very good talents. In the stories of “*Almeria*” and “*Manœuvring*,” the utmost powers of the reforming discipline are honestly represented as fairly baffled, from beginning to end, the culprits adhering to their faults and follies with inviolable fidelity,

—leaving our moral legislator no means of vindicating the merits of her system, but to show that the pride, and other inglorious principles, by the operation of which a reform of conduct was to have been effected, if they cannot amend the subjects of her discipline, can at least make them wretched. And so she leaves them, with as much indifference apparently as that with which a veteran sexton comes away from filling up the grave of one of his neighbours. She does not even, as far as appears, wish to turn them over to methodism, notwithstanding that this has the repute of sometimes working very strange transformations, and might as well have been mentioned as a last expedient worth the trying, in some of those obstinate desperate cases in which all the preparations from the great laboratory at Edgeworthstown, have been employed in vain. Perhaps, however, our author would think such a remedy, even in its utmost success, worse than the disease. Yet it would be a little curious to observe what she really *would* think and say at witnessing an instance in which a person, who had long pursued a foolish or profligate course in easy defiance of all such correctives as constitute her boasted discipline, being, at length, powerfully arrested by the thought of a judgment to come,—should forswear, at once, all his inveterate trifling or deeper immoralities, and adopt, and prosecute to his last hour, and with the highest delight, a far more arduous plan of virtue than any that she has dared to recommend or delineate. There have been very many such instances; and it would be extremely amusing—if some ideas too serious for amusement were not involved—on citing to her some indubitable example of this kind, to compel her to answer the plain question,—“Is this a good thing—yea or no?”

It was almost solely for the purpose of making a few remarks on the moral tendency of our author's voluminous productions, that we have noticed the work of which we have transcribed the title; and we need say very few words respecting the other qualities of her books. For predominant good sense, knowledge of the world, discrimination of character, truth in the delineation of manners, and spirited dialogue, it is hardly possible to praise them too much. Most of her characters are formed from the most genuine and ordinary materials of human nature,—with very little admixture of any thing derived from heaven, or the garden of Eden, or the mag-

nificent part of the regions of poetry. There is rarely any thing to awaken for one moment the enthusiasm of an aspiring spirit, delighted to contemplate, and ardent to resemble, a model of ideal excellence. Indeed, a higher order of characters would in a great measure have precluded an exercise of her talents in which she evidently delights, and in which she very highly excels—that is, the analyzing of the mixed motives by which persons are often governed, while they are giving themselves credit for being actuated by one simple and perfectly laudable motive : the detecting of all the artifices of dissimulation, and the illustration of all the modes in which selfishness pervades human society. Scarcely has Swift himself evinced a keener scent in pursuit of this sort of game ; a sort of game which, we readily acknowledge it is, with certain benevolent limitations, very fair and useful to hunt. And we must acknowledge too, that our author, while passing shrewd, is by no means cynical. She is very expert at contriving situations for bringing out all the qualities of her personages, for contrasting those personages with one another, for creating excellent amusement by their mutual reaction, and for rewarding or punishing their merits or faults. She appears intimately acquainted with the prevailing notions, prejudices, and habits, of the different ranks and classes of society. She can imitate, very satirically, the peculiar diction and slang of each ; and has contrived, but indeed it needed very little contrivance, to make the fashionable dialect of the upper ranks sound exceedingly silly. As far as she has had opportunities for observation, she has caught a very discriminative idea of national characters : that of the Irish is delineated with incomparable accuracy and spirit. It may be added, that our author, possessing a great deal of general knowledge, finds many lucky opportunities for producing it, in short arguments and happy allusions.

XII.

H U G H B L A I R .

An Account of the Life and Writings of Hugh Blair, D.D., F.R.S.E., one of the Ministers of the High Church, and Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh. By JOHN HILL, LL.D., F.R.S.E., Professor of Humanity in the University.

THERE appears to be some cause for apprehension, lest the extravagant admiration once lavished on Dr. Blair should decline, by degrees, into a neglect that will withhold even common justice. No productions so celebrated at first, as his sermons, have perhaps ever come in so short a time to be so nearly forgotten. Even before the conclusion of the series, the public enthusiasm and avidity had begun to languish, and the last volume seemed only announced in order to attend the funeral of its predecessors. The once delighted readers excused the change of their taste by pretending, and perhaps believing, that a great disparity was observable between the two prior volumes and those which followed them. The alleged inferiority might possibly exist in a certain degree; but the altered feeling was in a much greater degree owing to the recovery of sober sense, from the temporary inebriation of novelty and fashion; and the recovery was accompanied by a measure of that mortification, which seeks to be consoled by prompting a man to revenge himself on what has betrayed him into the folly.

As a critical writer, however, Dr. Blair has suffered much less from the lapse of years. His lectures have found their place and established their character among a highly respectable rank of books, and will always be esteemed valuable as an exercise of correct taste, and an accumulation of good sense, on the various branches of the art of speaking and writing. It was not absolutely necessary they should bear the

marks of genius, it was not indispensable that they should be richly ornamented ; but yet we can by no means agree with this biographer, that ornament would have been out of place, and that the dry style which prevails throughout the lectures is the perfection of excellence in writings on criticism. It has been often enough repeated, that such a bare thin style is the proper one for scientific disquisitions, of which the object is pure truth, and the instrument pure intellect : but, in general criticism, so much is to be done through the intervention of taste and imagination, that these faculties have a very great right to receive some tribute, of their own proper kind, from a writer who wishes to establish himself in their peculiar province. And the writings of Dryden, Addison, and Johnson, will amply show what graces may be imparted to critical subjects by a fine imagination, without in the least preventing or perplexing the due exercise of the reader's understanding. We are not so absurd as to reproach Dr. Blair for not having a fine imagination ; but we must censure his panegyrist for attempting to turn this want into a merit. Philosophical criticism, indeed, like that of Lord Kames and Dr. Campbell, which attempts to discover the abstract principles, rather than to illustrate the specific rules, of excellence in the fine arts,—and between the object of which, and of Dr. Blair's criticism, there is nearly the same difference as between the office of an anatomist who dissects, or a chemist who decomposes beautiful forms, and an artist who looks at and delineates them,—may do well to adhere to a plainer language ; but the biographer has judiciously withdrawn all claims, in behalf of Dr. Blair, to the character of a philosophical critic. He has acknowledged and even exposed the slightness of the Professor's observations on the formation of language. He has not, however, said one word of the irreligious inconsistency and folly of professing a zealous adherence to revelation, and at the same time, labouring to deduce the very existence of language, in a very slow progress, from inarticulate noises, the grand original element of speech, as it seems, among the primeval gentlefolk, at the time when they went on all-four, and grubbed up roots, and picked up acorns. Our readers will remember the happy ridicule of a part of this theory, in one of Cowper's letters, in which he humorously teaches one of these clever savages to make the sentence, "Oh, give me apple." They may find the system ably and argumentatively

exploded in Rousseau's "Discourse on the Inequality of Mankind." While this part of the lectures is given up to deserved neglect, we think the work will, on the whole, always maintain its character, as a comprehensive body of sensible criticism, and of very valuable directions in the art of writing. We agree with this biographer, in admiring especially the lectures on the subject of style.

But it is rather on the unrivalled excellence of the Sermons that Dr. Hill seems inclined to found the assurance of Dr. Blair's celebrity in future times. In order to persuade ourselves into the same opinion, we have been reading some of the most noted of those performances. And they possess some obvious merits, of which no reader can be insensible. The first is, perhaps, that they are not too long. It is not impertinent to specify the first, because we can put it to the consciences of our readers, whether, in opening a volume of sermons, their first point of inspection relative to any one which they are inclined to choose for its text or title, is not to ascertain the length. The next recommendation of the Doctor's sermons, is a very suitable, though scarcely ever striking, introduction, which leads directly to the business, and opens into a very plain and lucid distribution of the subject. Another is a correct and perspicuous language; and it is to be added, that the ideas are almost always strictly pertinent to the subject. This, however, forms but a very small part of the applause which was bestowed on these sermons during the transient day of their fame. They were then considered by many as examples of true eloquence; a distinction never perhaps attributed, in any other instance, to performances marked by such palpable deficiencies and faults.

In the first place, with respect to the language, though the selection of words is proper enough, the arrangement of them in the sentence is often in the utmost degree stiff and artificial. It is hardly possible to depart further from any resemblance to what is called a living, or spoken style, which is the proper diction at all events for popular addresses, if not for all the departments of prose composition. Instead of the thought throwing itself into words, by a free, instantaneous, and almost unconscious action, and passing off in that easy form, it is pretty apparent there was a good deal of handicraft employed in getting ready proper cases and trusses, of various but carefully measured lengths and figures, to put the thoughts

into, as they came out, in very slow succession, each of them cooled and stiffened to numbness in waiting so long to be dressed. Take, for example, such sentences as these: "Great has been the corruption of the world in every age. Sufficient ground there is for the complaints made by serious observers, at all times, of abounding iniquity and folly." "For rarely, or never, is old age contemned, unless when, by vice or folly, it renders itself contemptible." "Vain, nay often dangerous, were youthful enterprises, if not conducted by aged prudence." "If, dead to these calls, you already languish in slothful inaction," &c. "Smiling very often is the aspect, and smooth are the words of those who inwardly are the most ready to think evil of others." "Exempt, on the one hand, from the dark jealousy of a suspicious mind, it is no less removed, on the other, from that easy credulity which," &c. "Formidable, I admit, this may justly render it to them who have no inward fund," &c. "Though such employments of fancy come not under the same description with those which are plainly criminal, yet wholly unblameable they seldom are." "With less external majesty it was attended, but is, on that account, the more wonderful, that under an appearance so simple, such great events were covered."

There is also a perpetual recurrence of a form of the sentence, which might be occasionally graceful, or tolerable, when very sparingly adopted, but is extremely displeasing when it comes often; we mean that construction in which the quality or condition of the agent or subject is expressed first, and the agent or subject itself is put to bring up the latter clause. For instance, "Pampered by continual indulgence, all our passions will become mutinous and headstrong." "Practised in the ways of men, they are apt to be suspicious of design and fraud," &c. "Injured or oppressed by the world, he looks up to a judge who will vindicate his cause."

In the second place, there is no texture in the composition. The sentences appear often like a series of little independent propositions, each satisfied with its own distinct meaning, and capable of being placed in a different part of the train, without injury to any mutual connexion, or ultimate purpose, of the thoughts. The ideas relate to the subject generally, without specifically relating to one another. They all, if we may so speak, gravitate to one centre, but have no mutual attraction among themselves. The mind must often dismiss

entirely the idea in one sentence, in order to proceed to that in the next; instead of feeling that the second, though distinct, yet necessarily retains the first still in mind, and partly derives its force from it; and that they both contribute, in connexion with several more sentences, to form a grand complex scheme of thought, each of them producing a far greater effect, as a part of the combination, than it would have done as a little thought standing alone. The consequence of this defect is, that the emphasis of the sentiment and the crisis or conclusion of the argument comes nowhere; since it cannot be in any single insulated thought, and there is not mutual dependence and co-operation enough to produce any combined result. Nothing is proved, nothing is enforced, nothing is taught, by a mere accumulation of self-evident propositions, most of which are necessarily trite, and some of which, when they are so many, must be trivial. With a few exceptions, this appears to us to be the character of these sermons. The sermon, perhaps, most deserving to be excepted, is that "On the Importance of Religious Knowledge to Mankind," which exhibits a respectable degree of concatenation of thought, and deduction of argument. It would seem as if Dr. Blair had been a little aware of this defect, as there is an occasional appearance of remedial contrivance; he has sometimes inserted the logical signs *for* and *since*, when the connexion or dependence is really so very slight or unimportant that they might nearly as well be left out.

If, in the next place, we were to remark on the figures introduced in the course of these sermons, we presume we should have every reader's concurrence that they are, for the most part, singularly trite; so much so, that the volumes might be taken, more properly than any other modern book that we know, as comprising the whole common-places of imagery. A considerable portion of the produce of imagination was deemed an indispensable ingredient of eloquence, and the quota was therefore to be had in any way and of any kind. But the guilt of plagiarism was effectually avoided, by taking a portion of what society had long agreed to consider as made common and free to all. When occasionally there occurs a simile or metaphor of the writer's own production, it is adjusted with an artificial nicety, bearing a little resemblance to the labour and finish we sometimes see bestowed on the tricking out of an only child. It should, at the same

time, be allowed, that the consistency of the figures, whether common or unusual, is in general accurately preserved. The reader will be taught, however, not to reckon on this as a certainty. We have just opened on the following sentence : "Death is the gate which, at the same time that it *closes* on this world, *opens* into eternity." (Sermon on Death.) We cannot comprehend the construction and movement of such a gate, unless it is like that which we sometimes see in place of a stile, playing loose in a space between two posts ; and we can hardly think so humble an object could be in the author's mind, while thinking of the passage to another world.

With respect to the general power of thinking displayed in these sermons, we apprehend that discerning readers are coming fast toward a uniformity of opinion. They will all cheerfully agree that the author carries good sense along with him, wherever he goes ; that he keeps his subjects distinct ; that he never wanders from the one in hand ; that he presents concisely very many important lessons of sound morality ; and that in doing this he displays an uncommon knowledge of the more obvious qualities of human nature. He is never trifling nor fantastic ; every page is sober, and pertinent to the subject ; and resolute labour has prevented him from ever falling in a mortifying degree below the level of his best style of performance. He is seldom below a respectable mediocrity, but, we are forced to admit, that he very rarely rises above it. After reading five or six sermons, we become assured that we most perfectly see the whole compass and reach of his powers, and that, if there were twenty volumes, we might read on through the whole, without ever coming to a bold conception, or a profound investigation, or a burst of genuine enthusiasm. There is not in the train of thought a succession of eminences and depressions, rising towards sublimity, and descending into familiarity. There are no peculiarly striking short passages where the mind wishes to stop awhile, to indulge its delight, if it were not irresistibly carried forward by the rapidity of the thought. There are none of those happy reflections back on a thought just departing which seem to give it a second and a stronger significance, in addition to that which it had most obviously presented. Though the mind does not proceed with any eagerness to what is to come, it is seldom inclined to revert to what is gone

by; and any contrivance in the composition to tempt it to look back with lingering partiality to the receding ideas, is forborne by the writer; quite judiciously, for the temptation would fail.

A reflective reader will perceive his mind fixed in a wonderful sameness of feeling throughout a whole volume: it is hardly relieved a moment, by surprise, delight, or labour, and at length becomes very tiresome; perhaps a little analogous to the sensations of a Hindoo while fulfilling his vow, to remain in one certain posture for a month. A sedate formality of manner is invariably kept up through a thousand pages, without the smallest danger of ever luxuriating into a beautiful irregularity. We never find ourselves in the midst of any thing that reminds us of nature, except by that orderly stiffness which she forswears; or of freedom, except by being compelled to go in the measured paces of a dull procession. If we manfully persist in reading on, we at length feel a torpor invading our faculties, we become apprehensive that some wizard is about turning us into stones, and we can break the spell only by shutting the book. Having shut the book, we feel that we have acquired no definable addition to our ideas; we have little more than the consciousness of having passed along through a very regular series of sentences and unexceptionable propositions; much in the same manner as, perhaps, at another hour of the same day, we have the consciousness or remembrance of having just passed along by a very regular painted palisade, no one bar of which particularly fixed our attention, and the whole of which we shall soon forget that we have ever seen.

The last fault that we shall allege, is some defect on the ground of religion; not a deficiency of general seriousness, nor an infrequency of reference to the most solemn subjects, nor an omission of stating sometimes, in explicit terms, the leading principles of the theory of the Christian redemption. But we repeatedly find cause to complain that, in other parts of the sermon, he appears to forget these statements, and advances propositions which, unless the reader shall combine with them modifications which the author has not suggested, must contradict the principles. On occasions, he clearly deduces from the death and atonement of *Christ* the hopes of futurity, and consolations against the fear of death; and then, at other times, he seems most cautious to avoid this grand

topic, when adverting to the approach of death, and the feelings of that season ; and seems to rest all the consolations on the review of a virtuous life. We have sometimes to charge him also with a certain adulteration of the Christian moral principles, by the admixture of a portion of the worldly spirit. As a friend to Christianity, he wished her to be a little less harsh and peculiar than in her earlier days, and to show that she had not lived so long in the genteelest world in the creation, without learning politeness. Especially it was necessary for her to exercise due complaisance when she attended *him*, if she felt any concern about his reputation, as a companion of the fashionable, the sceptical, the learned, and the affluent, and a preacher to the most splendid congregation in the whole country. It would seem that she meekly took these delicate hints, and adopted a language which no gentleman could be ashamed to repeat, or offended to hear. The sermons abound with specimens of this improved dialect, but we cannot be supposed to have room here for quotations ; we will only transcribe a single short sentence from the Sermon on Death : “ Wherever religion, virtue, or true honour call him forth to danger, life ought to be hazarded without fear.” Now what is the meaning of the word “ honour,” evidently here employed to denote something distinct from virtue, and therefore not cognizable by the laws of morality ? Does the reverend orator mean, that to gain fame or glory, as it is called, or to avert the imputation or suspicion of cowardice, or to maintain some trivial punctilio of precedence or arrogant demand of pride, commonly called a point of honour, between individuals or nations, or to abet, as a matter of course, any cause rendered honourable by being adopted by the higher classes of mankind,—a Christian ought to hazard his life ? —Taken as the ground of the most awful duty to which a human being can be called, and yet thus distinguished from religion and morality, what the term means can be nothing good. The preacher did not, perhaps, exactly know what he intended it to mean ; but it was a term in high vogue, and therefore well adapted to be put along with religion and virtue to qualify their uncouthness. It was no mean proof of address to have made these two surly puritans accept their sparkish companion. If this passage were one among only a few specimens of a dubious language, it would be scandalous in us to quote it in this particular manner ; but as there

are very many phrases cast after a similar model, we have a right to cite it, as an instance of that tincture of the unsound maxims of the world, which we have asserted to be often perceptible in these sermons. This might be all in its place in the sermons of the despicable Yorick; but it is disgusting to hear a very grave divine blending, with Christian exhortations, the loathsome slang of duelling lieutenants, of gamblers, of scoffers at religion, of consequential fools who believe their own reputation the most important thing on earth, and indeed that the earth has nothing else to attend to, and of men whose rant about perhaps the glory of dying for their country, is mixed with insults to the Almighty, and imprecations of perdition on their souls.

This doubtful and accommodating quality was one of the chief causes, we apprehend, of the first extraordinary popularity of these sermons. A great many people of gayety, rank, and fashion, have occasionally a feeling that a little easy quantity of religion would be a good thing; because it is too true, after all, that we cannot be staying in this world always, and when one goes out of it, why, there may be some hardish matters to settle in the other place. The prayer-book of a Sunday is a good deal to be sure toward making all safe, but then it is really so tiresome; for penance it is very well, but to say one likes it, one cannot for the life of one. If there were some tolerable religious thing that one could read now and then without trouble, and think it about half as pleasant as a game of cards, it would be comfortable. One should not be so frightened about what we must all come to some time.—Now nothing could have been more to the purpose than these sermons; they were welcomed as the very thing. They were unquestionably about religion, and grave enough in all conscience; yet they were elegant; they were so easy to comprehend throughout, that the mind was never detained a moment to think; they were undefiled by methodism; they but little obtruded peculiar doctrinal notions; they applied very much to high life, and the author was evidently a gentleman; the book could be discussed as a matter of taste, and its being seen in the parlour excited no surmise that any one in the house had been lately converted. Above all, it was most perfectly free from that disagreeable and mischievous property attributed to the eloquence of Pericles, that it “left stings behind.”

With these recommendations, aided by the author's reputation as an elegant critic, and by his acquaintance with persons of the highest note, the book became fashionable ; it was circulated that Lord Mansfield had read some of the sermons to their Majesties ; peers and peeresses without number were cited, as having read and admired ; till at last it was almost a mark of vulgarity not to have read them, and many a lie was told to escape this imputation, by persons who had not yet enjoyed the advantage. Grave elderly ministers of much severer religious views than Dr. Blair, were, in sincere benevolence, glad that a work had appeared, which gave a chance for religion to make itself heard among the dissipated and the great, to whom ordinary sermons, and less polished treatises of piety, could never find access. Dainty young sprigs of theology, together with divers hopeful young men and maidens, were rejoiced to find that Christian truth could be attired in a much nicer garb than that in which it was exhibited in Beveridge, or in the Morning Exercises at Cripplegate.

If the huzzas attending the triumphal entry of these sermons had not been quite so loud, the present silence concerning them might not have appeared quite so profound. And if there had been a little more vigour in the thought, and any thing like nature and ease in the language, they might have emerged again into a respectable and permanent share of public esteem. But, as the case stands, we think they are gone or going irrevocably to the vault of the Capulets. Such a deficiency of ratiocination, combined with such a total want of original conception, is in any book incompatible with its staying long in the land of the living. And, as to the style, also, of these performances, there were not wanting, even in the hey-day and riot of their popularity, some doctors, cunning in such matters, who thought the dead monotony of the expression symptomatic of a disease that must end fatally.

We should apologize to our readers for having gone on thus far with our remarks, without coming to the work which has given the occasion for introducing them.

This volume has disappointed our expectation of finding a particular account of the life of Dr. Blair, enlivened with anecdotes illustrative of his character. Nearly half of it is occupied not in criticizing, but actually in epitomizing, the Doctor's writings, a labour of which it is impossible to comprehend the necessity or use, except to make up a handsome-

looking volume. Several of the most noted of the sermons are individually dissected, in a tedious manner, and compared with several of the sermons on the same subjects, in the volumes of some of the celebrated French preachers, but without any critical remarks of consequence. The other half of the book does relate mainly to the man himself, but is written much more in the manner of a formal academical eulogy, than of any thing like a lively and simple memoir. It is not florid, but it is as set and artificial as the composition of Dr. Blair himself; and indeed seems a very good imitation, or, at least, resemblance. Except in the acknowledgment of one or two slight weaknesses, as we are taught to deem them, in the Doctor's character, it is a piece of laboured and unvaried panegyric, carried on from page to page, with a gravity which becomes at length perfectly ludicrous. Hardly one circumstance is told in the language of simple narrative; every sentence is set to the task of applause. Even Dr. Blair himself, whose vanity was extreme, would have been almost satisfied, if such an exhibition of his qualities and talents had been written in time to have been placed in his view.

To avoid several pages of extracts, we must remark, that Dr. Blair was something of a beau, and very fond of novel reading. Every reader will be surprised and provoked to find so very small a share of personal history. It is well known that we are not in general to look for many incidents and adventures in the life of a scholar and clergyman: but we should have supposed that a period of eighty-three years might have furnished more matters of fact, than what could be comprised in a quarter of that number of pages. Those which are here afforded, consist of little beside the notice and dates of the two or three more obscure preferments of Dr. Blair, on his road to what is described the summit of ecclesiastical success and honour, the High Church of Edinburgh; his appointment as Professor of Belles Lettres; his failure of being placed in the situation of Principal of the University of Edinburgh, which he expected to receive from the pure gratitude and admiration of his country, without any solicitation; and, the important circumstance of preaching his last sermon. This circumstance, will be henceforward inserted, we trust, with its precise date, in all chronicles of the memorable things of past times; for it is enlarged on here, as if it had been one of the most momentous events of the century. He died De-

cember 27th, 1800, in the eighty-third year of his age, and the fifty-ninth of his ministry.

The Doctor's successful progress through life was on the whole adapted to gratify, one should think almost to satiety, that love of fame which his biographer declares, in so many words, to have been his ruling passion; nor had the passion which, Dr. Hill does *not* say, was second in command, the love of money, any great cause to complain.

We sincerely wish to persuade ourselves that, with all his labour of encomium, this Dr. Hill has done less than justice to his subject. For if we are to take his representation as accurate and complete, we have the melancholy spectacle of a preacher of religion, whose grand and uniform object in all his labours was advancement in the world. This is clearly the only view in which his admiring friend contemplates those labours. The preacher's *success* is constantly dwelt on with delight; but this success always refers to himself, and his own worldly interests, not to any religious influence exerted on the minds of his inferior, and afterwards, his splendid, auditories. His evangelical office is regarded as merely a professional thing, in which it was his happiness to surpass his competitors, to attain the highest reputation, to be placed in a conspicuous station, to obtain a comparative affluence, to be most sumptuously flattered by the great, and to be the intimate friend of Hume, Smith, Home, Ferguson, and Robertson. There is hardly a word that attributes to the admired preacher any concern about promoting the Christian cause, the kingdom of Christ, or the conversion of wicked men,—in short, any one of those sublime objects for which *alone* the first magnanimous promulgators of Christianity preached, and laboured, and suffered. It is easy to see that, though Dr. Blair's reputed eloquence had been made the means of imparting the light, and sanctity, and felicity, of religion, to ten thousand poor wicked peasants, yet if he had not sought and acquired high distinction in polished society, his learned biographer would have been utterly disinclined to celebrate him, as deeming him either a grovelling spirit, incapable of aiming at a high object, or the victim of malignant stars that forbade him to attain it. We could make plenty of citations to acquit ourselves of injustice in this representation: there are many passages of a quality similar to the following:—

“His Lordship,” (Chief Baron Orde,) “in his official capacity, was a

regular hearer of the Doctor's sermons, while his court sat, and there was no one better qualified to judge of the preacher's merit. This merit, too, was never more conspicuous than when it was honoured with the approbation of the venerable Judge. Dr. Blair's literary reputation was there thoroughly established. And the unwearied labour he underwent in his closet, while composing his sermons, was repaid by the admiration of a discerning audience."—P. 187.

The Doctor is commonly reputed to have had a tolerably sufficient attachment to pelf. He might have higher motives for clinging so fast to the patronage of Lord Melville, but it is irksome to hear of his being "so much indebted to that patron's munificence," with the addition of the fulsome cant that, "every favour which he received (from this patron) was *multa dantis cum laude*, and did honour to the hand that bestowed it. This patron is presumed to have been at the bottom of the pension of £200 granted from the public treasury.

In reading so many things about patronage, and munificence, and protection, and advancement, and success, it cannot fail to occur to any reader of sense to ask, with a sentiment very indignant in one reference, or very compassionate in the other—If all this was necessary to Dr. Blair, with a very small family, and with all the internal means attributed to him of advancing his interests, what is to become of ever so many hundred hapless clergymen, in Scotland and elsewhere, who have large families, slender livings, and *no* General Frazers, Chief Barons, and Lord Melvilles to "protect" them, no means of getting into the High Church of Edinburgh, no chance of attracting the notice of Royalty, and a pension of £200, and no hope of collecting tribute by means of a literary reputation "extending beyond the bounds of the British empire?"

XIII.

DAVID HUME

Account of the Life and Writings of David Hume, Esq.
By THOMAS EDWARD RITCHIE.

THIS is by no means so ample a memoir as the number of pages would seem to indicate. The last eighty pages are occupied with Hume's publication in French, relative to the affair with Rousseau; a translation of this pamphlet is inserted in the narrative, accompanied by several additional letters on the same business, and engrossing more than a hundred pages; and about one hundred and thirty pages are filled with criticism on Hume's writings, eight pages that were printed in the first edition of his "Essays," but in the later ones omitted by the author, and a critique on Wilkie's "Epigoniad," sent by Hume to the "Critical Review." Much less than half the book, therefore, is occupied with what is strictly biographical, even if we include a considerable number of his letters to some of his distinguished friends, especially Dr. Robertson. In so much of the volume as we owe to the pen of Mr. Ritchie, we do not find occasion for any great measure of either praise or blame. It is written with perspicuity, in a style not clumsy, but not remarkable for elegance. The detail of the few events of Hume's life would be sufficiently orderly, if there appeared less eagerness to seize and dilate every circumstance that can be introduced as an episode. A character of sense and independence is visible throughout; and the present is one of the very few biographers who are free from the weakness of enthusiastically admiring, or the hypocrisy of affecting so to admire, the mixed and imperfect subject of their pages. If he could have brought himself to the obsequiousness of promising to laud his subject up to the pitch of eulogy which would have gratified the delicate ears of Hume's living relations, he might have been ena-

bled to supply a great deficiency of information respecting the early years and habits of the philosopher ; but we are compelled to approve the independent conduct described in the note at page 4.

“In the hope of being enabled to fill up any chasm in this narrative, I applied to a near relation of Mr. Hume, and was told, that if the work was to advance his fame, and a copy of the manuscript furnished to the family, the information wanted would, perhaps, be supplied. With such conditions I refused compliance, choosing rather to remain satisfied with the little I had otherwise obtained, than to fetter my sentiments, and subject myself to so laborious a task, in return for what was probably of little importance.”

In the narrative part, great use is necessarily made of Hume's own memoir, called “My Own Life,” with the addition of Dr. Smith's details of the circumstances which preceded the exit. This is followed by a general estimate of Hume, as a metaphysician, a moralist, a writer on general policy, and a historian. It is a brief review of all his writings, and evinces a good share of acuteness and knowledge. The last eighteen pages of this review are filled with a curious collection of sentences from the “History of England,” as they stand corrected in the later editions, compared with the same sentences of the first edition, which are placed in an opposite column, with here and there a suggestion from Mr. Ritchie of still further corrections, wanted in some of these sentences. It would not seem that Mr. Hume's composition can pretend to high merit on the ground of correctness.

It is not the biographer's fault that Hume's life furnishes but a singularly meagre and uninteresting detail. It is curious to think how many thousands of his contemporaries whose names are forgotten, would have supplied each a far more animated and entertaining narrative. The story of many a common soldier or sailor, many a highwayman, many a gipsy, many a deserted child, and many a beggar, would have kept awake the attention which is much inclined to slumber over an account of this celebrated philosopher.—He was born at Edinburgh in 1711. There was some undefined quantity of nobility in the blood of his ancestors on both sides, and therefore we suppose in his own, of which he is said to have been always extremely vain. We are told, “the juvenile years of Hume were not marked by any thing which can attract our notice. His father died while our historian was an

infant, and left the care of him, his elder brother Joseph, and sister Catharine, to their mother, who, although in the bloom of life, devoted herself to the education of her children with laudable assiduity." He went to school and to college, was designed by his friends for the law, but was often guilty of slyly stealing from the lectures of his venerable tutors, Voet and Vinnius, into the much more dashing company of Cicero and Virgil. These gentlemen had certainly taken care to make their own fortunes, in their day; but their harangues and hexameters were of so little service to that of their admirer, which had no broader basis than the patrimony of a Scottish younger brother, that he determined to enter on some commercial pursuit. He therefore left the citizens of Rome, and went to try his skill among those of Bristol; but finding himself after a few months, totally unequal to the bustle incident to a mercantile situation, he abandoned the attempt, and went to France. Thence he returned to London in 1737, and, in the following year, published his "Treatise of Human Nature."

Under the profession of showing what qualifications are requisite for the satisfactory performance of such a work as this pretends to be, Mr. Ritchie has given a sketch of the history of philosophy, or rather a catalogue of philosophers, from Plato to Hume. But we do not exactly comprehend the design of this, unless he means to be understood, that to be able to indite a philosophical treatise on human nature, the writer must have studied all that has ever been written, by all the philosophers of ancient and modern times. We could certainly wish that Hume had deemed this an indispensable prerequisite to the privilege of writing and vending his own sceptical cogitations; but it is too evident that none of the infidel philosophers have ever had the conscience to acknowledge the obligation of this preliminary duty. This enumeration of distinguished names ends with a real curiosity, a list of about a sixth part, as the author believes, of "the commentators and scholiasts on Aristotle's philosophical works," which accumulates the titles of books containing, in all, a quantity of writing which would have amounted to several hundred quarto volumes.

It is well known, from Hume's own acknowledgment, that this his first performance was utterly neglected by the public. In making the acknowledgment, he praises the equanimity

which he maintained on the occasion, and the facility with which his cheerful and sanguine temper returned to the habit of animation and hope. Mr. Ritchie has in his text consented to say the same thing, but has subjoined a note which gives another representation of the philosopher's patience and tranquillity.

"In the 'London Review,' Vol. V. p. 290, (anno 1777,) edited by Dr. Kenrick, there is a note on this passage in our author's biographical narrative, rather inimical to the amenity of disposition claimed by him. The reviewer says,—'so sanguine, that it does not appear our author had acquired, at this period of his life, that command over his passions of which he afterwards makes his boast. His disappointment at the public reception of his 'Essay on Human Nature,' had indeed a violent effect on his passions in a particular instance; it not having dropped so *dead-born* from the press, but that it was severely handled by the reviewers of those times, in a publication entitled, *The Works of the Learned*; a circumstance which so highly provoked our young philosopher, that he flew in a violent rage to demand satisfaction of Jacob Robinson, the publisher, whom he kept, during the paroxysm of his anger at the sword's point, trembling behind the counter, lest a period should be put to the life of a sober critic, by a raving philosopher.'"

The repugnance of mankind to receive instruction should not deter an enlightened and benevolent man who may have failed in the first effort, from soliciting their attention again, and holding up salutary truths afresh to their view. Mr. Hume displayed in a high degree this generous perseverance. Having endeavoured to explain to an ungrateful and indocile nation, that there is a wonderful difference between impressions and ideas; that there is no such connexion between causes and effects, as to support any argument in defence of religion or for the being of a God; that no man can admit the truth of the Christian religion but by a miracle taking place in his mind at every moment; that the Deity, if there be any such thing, is just so great as his actual visible works indicate, and no greater; together with various other precious and pious doctrines; it had been a desertion of the great cause of truth and utility to have let these discoveries sink in silence, merely because the public had paid but little attention to them on their first or second promulgation. They might be received again with the same indifference; but whether men would hear or whether they would forbear, the philosopher was resolved the truth should be testified to them once more. After a few years, the substance of the "Treatise on Human Na-

ture" was new-modelled and republished, with greater maturity of reasoning, in his "Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding," and his "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals." These works, however, experienced the same neglect as the first. The grief of the disinterested reformer of the judgments and morals of men may well be imagined to have been extreme, at this repeated proof of their perverseness and hardness of heart; a grief so purely benevolent, that it could be but imperfectly consoled by the reflection, that he had at least performed his own part, and acquitted himself of all the guilt. In regard to such a case, one is anxious to believe, if one could, that really virtue is its own reward. If it be not so, there could be few spectacles more pitiable than that of a philosophical philanthropist, like Mr. Hume, toiling without any success as to the immediate object, and without any hope of a life after death to reward him amidst a happy rest from his labours. His generous distress was not, however, doomed to be altogether without mitigation. About the same period of his life at which the two "Inquiries" ineffectually tried to obtain attention, he published some of his "Essays," which, finding a more favourable reception, relieved in some measure the forlornness of his literary prospects, and gave a fresh stimulus to that indefatigable application to study, which even his disappointments had scarcely been sufficient to relax.

There are various expressions in this and other parts of the volume, pretty plainly indicating Mr. Ritchie's own dispositions towards religion. His condemnation of these proceedings against infidelity does not appear to arise, in any degree, from a concern for the cause of religion, which he might think this an injudicious and injurious mode of defending, but from a contempt of the zeal which could think it worth while to take any interest about religion at all, or in *any* way to make a strenuous effort in its defence. Nor is it apparently his anxiety for the endangered liberty of the press, that prompts the indignation, but really a friendly sympathy with the cause of deism, and with Hume considered in the character of its advocate and apostle, to whose writings possibly the biographer feels indebted and grateful for some part of his freedom from prejudice and superstition.

But, while we cannot entertain the smallest respect for the motive of our author's censure of these proceedings, we disapprove, as much as he can do, the exertion of temporal force,

whether in an ecclesiastical or purely secular form, or any proceedings tending to this exertion, against the propagators of erroneous speculations. We disapprove it for the obvious reasons which have been repeated innumerable times.

1. The exertion of force for the suppression or punishment of error, proceeds on a principle which is itself the most impious of all errors ; it assumes the infallibility of the power that makes it.

2. Though the power, whether an individual or a corporation of persons, exercising such authority, *were* an infallible judge of truth, there can be no proof derived from the Christian institutes, that the Governor of the world has invested the temporal authority with any right of interference or punishment, one step beyond the offences which immediately violate the good order of the body politic. But the most absolute proof from this source is required, since nothing can be more dangerous and wicked, than to hazard an encroachment on the peculiar and exclusive province of the divine jurisdiction.

3. As this exercise of power is not authorized by Christianity, so neither can it be justified by any practical experience of its being adapted to produce its intended effect. The experience of ages testifies its inefficacy. The reaction of the human mind, against what has been felt as persecution, has commonly produced a more obstinate adherence to the obnoxious opinions, which have thenceforth been propagated with more daring zeal, or with more sedulous cunning, so that their extermination could be effected only by exterminating their believers.

4. If this power is to be exercised at all, there are no definable limits to its exercise, since there can be no indisputable rules for deciding what error is too small, or what punishment is too great. It will be impossible to ascertain the proportions of turpitude and pernicious tendency in the various forms and degrees of error ; and among the adherents to any given system of opinions, there will not be wanting some who can foresee the most dreadful consequences necessarily resulting from the rejection of even the minutest of its articles, and who therefore, if invested with power, and unrestrained by policy, would enact fines, imprisonment, exile, or death, against the slightest deviation from the appointed creed.

5. If we could even admit the possibility of such an exercise of human power being just in the abstract, it is impossi-

ble to find or imagine any man, or corporation of men, so sublimely virtuous as to exercise it with an exclusive disinterested regard to its object. In all cases that ever yet occurred, worldly advantage, or the spirit of party, or some other mean principle, has mingled in those proceedings of temporal power, against heretics and unbelievers, which have been professedly dictated by a pure love of truth.

Lastly, it seems no less than a virtual rejection of religion, to admit that its evidence is not such as to support it, without the assistance of a provision to inflict temporal pains and penalties on its adversaries and deserters.

In these observations we have used the word *temporal power*, notwithstanding that the proceedings meditated against Hume were of an ecclesiastical nature. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that wherever the church is formally supported as a corporate body by the authority, and as the constituent part, of the state, it has the power of the state in all its institutions and proceedings, and can either inflict punishment by a process of its own, or consign the offender over to the civil magistrate. If the excommunication which would have followed the success of the proposed measure against Hume and Kames, had amounted to no more than purely an ecclesiastical anathema, the expression merely of the *opinion* of the clerical body, they would have laughed at the church and all its assemblies and debates; but as the case stood, they both felt no little anxiety; for, as Mr. Ritchie observes, "when their adversaries were armed with a sentence of excommunication, they had it in their power to institute a criminal process in the ordinary courts of justice. Similar measures of severity had not unfrequently been resorted to in England, where Woolston had not only been exalted to the pillory, but bore on his person manifest evidence of the humane and tolerant spirit of a national clergy." (P. 70). All men of liberal minds rejoice that these methods of refuting and restraining infidelity have long since become obsolete. For some years past our government and clergy have had the wisdom to consign the question, in all its parts, to the pure jurisdiction of reason; and the writings of our Christian advocates have shown how safely the sacred cause may be left without any other aid, except the influence of Heaven. Reviewing the actions of past ages, we may exult in it as a grand attainment of the human mind, and a noble distinction of the present times, that men are become persuaded religion possesses

within itself the means of its triumph, and is of too lofty a spirit to accept any obligations from magistrates, pillories, and prisons.

These discussions in the ecclesiastical courts somewhat contributed to bring into notice the portion of the "History of England" which Hume published about this time. For a number of years, however, the sale was slow, and the slender share of reputation most mortifying to his ruling passion. With the exception of two or three tracts, he had not even the consolation of exciting literary hostility, which would have been beyond all comparison more gratifying to him than this silent and inglorious toleration. He pretends indeed, in his memoir of his own life, that some parts of the history did excite a violent clamour; but this story seems to have been of the same accuracy as that of the redoubtable Falstaff, when he swore he had been set upon by some fifty ruffians at least; for the biographer, "after a diligent search into the literary histories of that period, has been unable to discover any of that outcry which assailed the sensitive ears of Mr. Hume. In later times, indeed, his accuracy, impartiality, and political tenets have been attacked, and with justice, but without any clamour, and seldom with illiberality." P. 106.

Many pages are occupied with a history of the successive literary societies in Scotland, the Rankenian Club, the Poker Club, the Select Society, the Philosophical Society, and the Royal Society of Edinburgh, of several of which Hume was a member, together with the most eminent of his contemporaries. It is justly asserted that these associations greatly contributed, beside their effect on the individuals composing them, to promote in Scotland a literary taste, a refinement of composition, and a bold and comprehensive speculation.

A kind of amicable rivalry in historical composition, confirmed the habits of intimate communication between Hume and Robertson; the greater number of the letters of Hume which are published, or rather re-published in this volume, (for many of them have been printed before,) are addressed to his brother historian. Both these and his other letters are in general excellent specimens of an easy diction, unaffected good sense, politeness, and sometimes delicate pleasantry.

Hume enjoyed the high advantage over his accomplished friend, of residing, at several times, a number of years in France and Italy, as well as of spending considerable portions

of time in the English metropolis. From this citizenship of the world, he necessarily acquired a considerable degree of freedom from local prejudices, tastes, and dialect, an ampler collection of facts for an inductive estimate of human nature, and a richer store of images, supplied by so many views of nature and art, for giving life, colour, and variety, to the pictures and narrations of history. And yet it is almost wonderful that, in point of fact, he so little, after all, excelled in these respects his untravelled rival. If it be admitted that Hume has the advantage in shrewdness of minute discrimination, yet we believe it is felt by sensible readers, that Robertson is quite as much a master of general principles, that he gives a still greater prominence to important facts, and that, in the art of infusing into the scenes a moral interest, which shall command the passions, he far surpasses his frigid contemporary ; in short, that history, under the management of Robertson, is less a *scene of the dead*, than under that of Hume. The style also of the former is almost as exempt from nationality of phrase as that of the latter.

In quality of Secretary to the British ambassador, Hume visited Vienna and Turin, and about the age of fifty was employed as *chargé d'affaires* at Paris. It was at this time that he became involved in the well-known affair with Rousseau, which has more of the character of an adventure than any other circumstance of his life, and of which the story and documents, in French and English, fill almost half the present volume. Our philosopher invited Rousseau to take refuge in England, from the danger which threatened him in France on account of his *Emilius*, which had given offence to the Ecclesiastical order. Rousseau availed himself of the invitation ; and Hume really appears to have taken extraordinary pains, with extraordinary patience, to place him in an agreeable situation, which was at last effected in Derbyshire. For a short time, the expressions of gratitude and admiration were raised to a style of fulsome excess. But very soon the morbid mind of Rousseau began to conceive dark suspicions, that his pretended benefactor was only a wicked and traitorous agent of that grand conspiracy, which it was now most evident that all mankind had taken the trouble to enter into, against his peace, his fame, and even his personal safety. The circumstances which excited the suspicion, and soon confirmed it into an invincible persuasion, were more trivial than even those from which dramatists

have represented the commencement and progress of mistaken jealousy. A more amusing exhibition was perhaps never made, of the servility of a strong understanding to a wretched temperament, than that afforded by a number of letters of Rousseau, and especially by one of great length, describing the whole progress of his feelings, and replete with virulence, eloquence, and perverse ingenuity. The reader at this time may be entertained by the quarrel without caring which of them was in the wrong, though his censure will inevitably fall on the citizen of Geneva. The dispute was well worth perusing, for the sake of the contrast between the men; for the world will probably never see again such an instance of the two extremes of the philosophic character brought in contact. We could amuse ourselves by compounding, in imagination, these two elements in equal proportions, or with various degrees of the predominance of either. It may be worth while for any one who proposes to set up for a philosopher, to do this, in order to find the standard to which it may be prudent to conform himself. About an equal mixture of them would make a man whom all would be constrained to admire; but no mixture would constitute one whom a good man could approve or revere. Even if the history of the world did not supply a far nobler class of human beings, to be placed in contrast with such as the persons in question, or as any imaginable combination of the two characters, it would still be evident, that men most religiously devoted to the pursuit of fame, that is, idolatry of self, devoid of any pure, unmingled wish to do good, and neglectful or contemptuous of the authority of the Supreme Spirit, are creatures of a very degraded order, mere *terræ filii*, notwithstanding the sagacity which can illustrate the records of time, or unfold the nature of man, notwithstanding the originality which can invent new systems, or the eloquence which can adorn them.

The account of the closing part of Hume's life has long been very well known to the public; but we are inclined to print it once more, as exhibiting what would probably be admitted, and even cited, by infidels, as an example of the noblest and most magnanimous deportment in the prospect of death, that it is possible for any of their class to maintain; an example indeed which very few of them ever, in their serious moments, dare promise themselves to equal, though they may, like Mr. Ritchie, deem it in the highest degree enviable. It

may be taken as quite their apostolic specimen, standing parallel in their history to the instance of St. Paul in the records of the Christians, "I have fought a good fight," &c. Mr. Hume had visited Bath, but was returning to Scotland, under an increase of his fatal malady. At this period, however,

"His cheerfulness never forsook him. He wrote letters to his literary friends, informing them of his intention to be at Edinburgh on a certain day, and inviting them to dine with him on the day following. It was a kind of farewell dinner: and among those who came to partake of the hospitality of the dying historian, were Lord Elibank, Dr. Smith, Dr. Blair, Dr. Black, Professor Ferguson, and John Home.

"At his return to Edinburgh, Mr. Hume, though extremely debilitated by disease, went abroad at times in a sedan chair, and called on his friends; but his ghastly looks intimated the rapid approach of death. He diverted himself with correcting his works for a new edition, with reading books of amusement, with the conversation of his friends, and sometimes in the evening with a party at his favourite game of whist. His facetiousness led him to indulge occasionally in the bagatelle. Among other verbal legacies, in making which he amused himself, the following whimsical one has been related. The author of Douglas is said to have a mortal aversion to port wine, and to have had frequent disputes with the historian about the manner of spelling his name. Both these circumstances were often the subject of Mr. Hume's raillery; and he verbally bequeathed to the poet a quantity of port wine, on condition that he should always drink a bottle at a sitting, and give a receipt for it under the signature of John Hume.

"Dr. Smith has recorded an instance of Mr. Hume's sportive disposition; and it also shows the placidity of his mind, notwithstanding the prospect of speedy dissolution. Colonel Edmonstone came to take leave of him; and, on his way home, he could not forbear writing Hume a letter, bidding him once more an eternal adieu, and applying to him the French verses in which the Abbé Chaulieu, in expectation of his own death, laments his approaching separation from his friend the Marquis de la Fare. Dr. Smith happened to enter the room while Mr. Hume was reading the letter; and in the course of the conversation it gave rise to, Mr. Hume expressed the satisfaction he had in leaving his friends, and his brother's family in particular, in prosperous circumstances. This, he said, he felt so sensibly, that when he was reading, a few days before, Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, he could not, among all the excuses which are alleged to Charon for not entering readily into his boat, find one that fitted him. He had no house to finish; he had no daughter to provide for; he had no enemies upon whom he wished to revenge himself. 'I could not well imagine,' said he, 'what excuse I could make to Charon, in order to obtain a little delay. I have done every thing of consequence which I ever meant to do. I could at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them: I therefore have all reason to die contented.'

"'He then diverted himself,' continues Dr. Smith, 'with inventing several jocular excuses, which he supposed he might make to Charon, and

in imagining the very surly answers which it might suit the character of Charon to return to them.' 'Upon further consideration,' said he, 'I thought I might say to him, Good Charon, I have been correcting my works for a new edition. Allow me a little time, that I may see how the public receives the alterations. But Charon would answer, When you see the effect of these, you will be for making other alterations. There will be no end of such excuses; so, honest friend, please step into the boat. But I might still urge, Have a little patience, good Charon: I have been endeavouring to open the eyes of the public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition. But Charon would then lose all temper and decency: You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue.'

"The hour of his departure had now arrived. His decline being gradual, he was, in his last moments, perfectly sensible, and free from pain. He showed not the slightest indication of impatience or fretfulness, but conversed with the people around him in a tone of mildness and affection; and his whole conduct evinced a happy composure of mind. On Sunday, the 25th of August, 1776, about four o'clock in the afternoon, this great and amiable man expired."—Pp. 298—301.

On this most remarkable exhibition we think there was room for the biographer to have made several observations—

First, supposing a certainty of the final cessation of conscious existence at death, this indifference to life, if it was not affected (which indeed we suspect it to have been in part) was an absurd undervaluation of a possession which almost all rational creatures, that have not been extremely miserable, have held most dear, and which is in its own nature most precious. To be a conscious agent, exerting a rich combination of wonderful faculties, to feel an infinite variety of pleasurable sensations and emotions, to contemplate all nature, to extend an intellectual presence to indefinite ages of the past and future, to possess a perennial spring of ideas, to run infinite lengths of inquiry, with the delight of exercise and fleetness, even when not with the satisfaction of full attainment, and to be a lord over inanimate matter, compelling it to an action and a use altogether foreign to its nature,—to be all this, is a state so stupendously different from that of being simply a piece of clay, that to be quite easy and complacent in the immediate prospect of passing from the one to the other, is a total inversion of all reasonable estimates of things; it is a renunciation, we do not say of sound philosophy, but of common sense. The certainty that the loss will not be felt after it has taken place, will but little soothe a man of unpervverted mind in considering what it is that he is going to lose.

2. The jocularity of the philosopher was contrary to good *taste*. Supposing that the expected loss were *not*, according to a grand law of nature, a cause for melancholy and desperation, but that the contentment were rational; yet the approaching transformation was at all events to be regarded as a very grave and very strange event, and therefore jocularity was totally incongruous with the anticipation of such an event: a grave and solemn feeling was the only one that could be in unison with the contemplation of such a change. There was, in this instance, the same incongruity which we should impute to a writer who should mingle buffoonery in a solemn crisis of the drama, or with the most momentous event of a history. To be in harmony with his situation, in his own view of that situation, the expressions of the dying philosopher were required to be dignified; and if they were in any degree vivacious, the vivacity ought to have been rendered graceful by being accompanied with the noblest effort of the intellect of which the efforts were going to cease for ever. The low vivacity of which we have been reading, seems but like the quickening corruption of a mind whose faculty of perception is putrefying and dissolving even before the body. It is true that good men, of a high order, have been known to utter pleasantries in their last hours. But these have been pleasantries of a fine ethereal quality, the scintillations of animated hope, the high pulsations of mental health, the involuntary movements of a spirit feeling itself free even in the grasp of death, the natural springs and boundings of faculties on the point of obtaining a still much greater and a boundless liberty. These had no resemblance to the low and laboured jokes of our philosopher; jokes so laboured as to give strong cause for suspicion, after all, that they were of the same nature, and for the same purpose, as the expedient of a boy on passing through some gloomy place in the night, who whistles to lessen his fear, or to persuade his companion that he does not feel it.

3. Such a manner of meeting death was inconsistent with the scepticism, to which Hume was always found to avow his adherence. For that scepticism necessarily acknowledged a possibility and a chance that the religion which he had scorned, might, notwithstanding, be found true, and might, in the moment after his death, glare upon him with all its terrors. But how dreadful to a reflecting mind would have been the smallest chance of meeting such a vision! Yet the philosopher could

be cracking his heavy jokes, and Dr. Smith could be much diverted at the sport.

4. To a man who solemnly believes the truth of revelation, and therefore the threatenings of divine vengeance against the despisers of it, this scene will present as mournful a spectacle as perhaps the sun ever shone upon. We have beheld a man of great talents and invincible perseverance, entering on his career with the profession of an impartial inquiry after truth, met at every stage and step by the evidences and expostulations of religion and the claims of his Creator, but devoting his labours to the pursuit of fame and the promotion of impiety, at length acquiring and accomplishing, as he declared himself, all he had intended and desired, and descending toward the close of life amidst tranquillity, widely-extending reputation, and the homage of the great and the learned. We behold him appointed soon to appear before that Judge to whom he had never alluded but with malice or contempt; yet preserving to appearance an entire self-complacency, idly jesting about his approaching dissolution, and mingling with the insane sport his references to the fall of "superstition," a term of which the meaning is hardly ever dubious when expressed by such men. We behold him at last carried off, and we seem to hear, the following moment, from the darkness in which he vanishes, the shriek of surprise and terror, and the overpowering accents of the messenger of vengeance. On the whole globe there probably was not acting, at the time, so mournful a tragedy as that of which the friends of Hume were the spectators, without being aware that it was any tragedy at all.

If that barbarous old Charon *would* have permitted a century or two more of life, it is probable that Hume would have been severely mortified in viewing the effect of his writings against "superstition," an effect so much less than his vanity no doubt secretly anticipated. Indeed, his strictly philosophical works seem likely to fall into utter neglect. The biographer justly observes, that, though very acute, they are not very lucid or systematic in point of reasoning; and they have none of that eloquence, which sometimes continues to interest the general reader in works that are becoming superannuated in the schools of philosophy. Many of his shorter essays will always be read with much advantage; but his *History*, we need not say, is the basis of his permanent reputation; and it will perpetuate the moral, as well as the

intellectual cast of his mind ; it will show a man indifferent to the welfare of mankind, contemptuous of the sublime feelings of moral and religious heroism, incapable himself of all grand and affecting sentiments, and constantly cherishing a consummate arrogance, though often under the semblance and language of philosophic moderation.

XIV.

P H I L O S O P H Y O F N A T U R E .

The Philosophy of Nature ; or, the Influence of Scenery on the Mind and Heart.

IT may be asserted that there is a relation between the human mind and the whole known creation : in other words, that there are some principles of correspondence in the constitution of the mind, and in the constitutions of all known created things, such as some modes of inspiration, in consequence of which, those things are adapted to produce some effect on the mind when they are presented to it, whether through the medium of the senses, or in any more immediately intellectual manner. It may be added, perhaps, that if the condition of the mind were absolutely and perfectly good, this effect would always be beneficial.

As the mind must, in all periods and regions of its existence, receive its happiness from causes exterior to itself, and as it is probable the one Supreme Cause of that happiness, the Deity, will make a very great part of the happiness which human spirits are to receive from him, come to them through the medium of his works, it is a matter of inexpressible exultation, that those works are so stupendous in multiplicity and magnitude ; that they are, indeed, for all practical purposes, infinite. It is with a triumphant emotion, that an aspiring spirit, assured of living for ever, trusting in the divine mercy that it shall be happy in that eternity of life, and certain that its happiness must arise from the impressions made on it by surrounding existences,—it is with an emphatic emotion of triumph that such a spirit considers the vastness of the universe, as progressively demonstrated to us by the advances of science, and as attempted to be realized by an earnest, a delightful, but still an overwhelmed effort of imagination. For it regards the infinity of things as the scene of its indefatigable

and everlasting activity, in which it shall find that millions of contemplated manifestations of beauty and sublimity are but preparing it to advance to new visions, with perceptions for ever becoming more vivid, and delight for ever growing more intense.

A spirit of this order will regard the ample display of beauty and magnificence made even to the inhabitants of this globe, as forming a kind of introductory stage for the indulgence and exercise of curiosity and admiration ; and as adapted, in combination with the objects of religious faith, to operate on the conformation and habitudes of the mind with an influence not less salutary than pleasing. This admirer of the Creator's works will, indeed, be sometimes compelled to regret the feebleness of the senses by means of which the soul is reduced to receive its perceptions of creation ; will sometimes be tempted to deplore the inferiority of the terrestrial region itself to such worlds as he can easily imagine to exist ; and will much oftener lament, that even of this sublunary scene, he is by many causes, confined to contemplate, immediately with his own faculties of perception, an extremely diminutive portion, and perhaps of an immensely inferior character, in point of beauty and sublimity, to many other portions of it ; yet he will, nevertheless, be arrested and delighted by many phenomena ; will often lose himself in inquisition and wonder ; and, on the whole, will be sensible that nature greatly affects the habitual state of his mind.

Such a description is applicable, however, to a very small number, comparatively, of the human race. This captivation of nature is felt by extremely few but highly cultivated minds, and, indeed, by the smaller proportion only even of them. Here and there, a rare individual who has received from nature an extraordinary measure of imagination and sensibility, feels the enchanting influence in the early years of life, antecedent to the high cultivation of the faculties ; and onward through life, though the full means and advantages of that discipline should never be enjoyed. But it is notorious that the generality of men are exempt. Savages are quite insensible to the beautiful or the awful aspect of the scenes in which they are pursuing their occupations of hunting, fishing, and war. They would stand without emotion on the precipice from which they would look down on the cataract of Niagara. Nor, perhaps, would the half-civilized Canadian hunter be betrayed, in

the same situation, into any great excess of solemnity or enthusiasm. We remember the perfect sobriety of prose with which an American man of the woods, who was even capable of writing a book, Patrick Gass, has described or mentioned the great falls of the Missouri. The same want of what may be called poetical feeling, regarding the sublimities of scenery, is apparent in all the uncultivated and slightly cultivated nations, from the savage up to the confines of the civilized state ; in the South Americans, the Tartars, the Laplanders, the Norwegians, and even the Icelanders,—excepting that some among these North European nations associate certain mysterious ideas of reverence and fear with their great mountains. We are not aware, that even in the inhabitants of Switzerland, an admiration of its grand scenery constitutes any material part of that passion for their country for which they are so celebrated. We need not say a word of the mass of the population of those regions, which combine the beauties of nature with the striking remains of the Grecian and Roman taste and magnificence. If we come, at last, to what assumes, and, indeed, we believe justly assumes, to be the most cultivated people on earth, we doubt whether we can make any striking improvement of the representation, as to the inspiring and elevating influence of nature, and the number and enthusiasm of her pupils. Of the several divisions of our territory and people, the country and posterity of Ossian have assumed greatly the highest character for influences exerted by the scenery and felt by the people. We have read, in close succession, Dr. Johnson's account of the region and the race, and Mrs. Grant's : a conjunction and comparison which reminded us of the description given by travellers of the flowery tracts immediately on the edge of the eternal ice on the lower declivities of the Alps. It would be delightful to receive Mrs. Grant's representation as the correct one ; and, therefore, we endeavour, with all our might, to believe in it ; nevertheless, we are visited by strong surmises of *unintentional* poetry in the lady's very interesting memorials of a national character, which, she confesses, is fast approaching to extinction. While we can conceive, and indeed admit, that there was in the character of the Highlanders, before the breaking up of their ancient social economy, something more imaginative, more perceptive of the gloomy sublimity of their scenery, more responsive, by solemn and elevated sentiments,

to its aspects, than was perhaps ever to be found in any other uncultivated tribe inhabiting a similar region, it would yet be absurd to set substantially aside, in favour of this one race, the general law, that unexpanded faculties, undisciplined taste, scantiness of associated ideas, want of the means of judging of objects by comparison ;—in one word, that ignorance must inevitably preclude, in a great degree, that kind of sensibility and reflection by which the mind has its perception of the fair, the marvellous, and the sublime in nature. And, doubtless, the contemplative enthusiasm indulged on the mountains, among the rocks, by the torrents and cataracts, and on the sea shore, was confined to the few spirits of the family or the kindred of genius, while the great majority could behold such objects with only a little less temperance of emotion than the ordinary tone of sentiment among other rustic portions of mankind. Assuredly it was not every Highlander that gave out emanations of poetry while passing under impending precipices, or standing on the summits of mountains.

If we descend from that legendary, visionary, and almost vanished race, to the uncultivated population of England, Wales, and Ireland, there will need no other experiment than that of a short sojourn in Cumberland, in Carnarvonshire, or near the lakes of Killarney, to estimate the influence of natural beauty and grandeur on the generality of the people placed under their habitual operation. And we apprehend that the investigator will be utterly disappointed if he expects to find any mental modification, corresponding to the nobleness of the scenes. He will find that the main proportion of their habitual spectators are not either consciously or unconsciously the subjects of their power. Not unconsciously ; they have not acquired insensibly a richer imagination ; they have not a more vivid sensibility to the sublime and beautiful generally, as elements in the constitution of the natural and moral world, and as displayed in literature and the arts. Not consciously : they are not haunted by the images of the grand peculiarities of the scene around them ; their minds are not arrested and thrown into trains of thought by their aspect ; they can pass long spaces of time without even distinctly recognizing them as objects to be thought of when they are seen, and still longer spaces without employing any of their leisure in visiting the spots (perhaps not far off) which are the most striking in themselves, or which afford the most commanding

views of the wonders of the region. And if sometimes a party of pleasure is made up for such a visit, it is very commonly seen that the graces or the majesty of nature engage but very little of their attention, and that they scarcely at all, unless perhaps by augmented hilarity, affect the tone of their feelings. The looks, sometimes thrown vaguely over the scene, are evidently not such as to bring the soul in contact with it:

“There is no speculation in those eyes.”

The lively talk about indifferent subjects, the freaks and frolic, the good or bad cheer, the little diverting or vexatious incidents, shall so besport away the hours and faculties, that the whole expedition might appear to have been planned as an insult on the goddess (that has had so many pretended worshippers, and so few true ones) Nature, in the way of practically telling her how little all her fine things are good for.

Among a multitude of flights of rhapsody in the work that has led us into these observations, there is one in glorification of Snowdon, in which, after a great deal of probably real, and certainly reasonable enthusiasm, with an addition of what we suspect to be rhetorical affectation, it is asserted, without the compliment of looking round in anticipation of any body's scepticism, that “No one ever mounted this towering eminence but he became a wiser and a better man.” And several particulars are specified, in which it is assumed as infallible, that this transforming energy must evince itself on a summit, which, it seems, is high enough to attract the influences of a heaven superior to that of the lightnings. This bold position imports at the very least, and as the minor part of the fact which it asserts, that every one who beholds what may be seen from that eminence, is profoundly affected by the magnificent vision. Now, we happen to have had plentiful evidence on the spot, that a number of human beings may look from that sublime position, on all that it commands, by the light of the rising sun, and be little more impressed and detained by the view than they would in standing to contemplate, on the busy day, the market place of any large town, and very much less than in surveying that area when filled with the exhibitions of a fair. As the rule must be, that the subsequent effects on the mind can only be in proportion to the force of the impression, it is not worth while to waste even a guess on the probable improvement in goodness, wis-

dom, or taste, derived by these spectators from a scene to which these islands, perhaps, do not afford an equal.

It is to the uncultivated portion of a nation which, nevertheless, accounts itself collectively more cultivated than all others, that we have mainly limited these observations. But whoever has had many opportunities of observing, with respect to the point in question, the much smaller portion that may make pretensions to be distinguished as cultivated, will have to testify that a real, thoughtful perception, and a genuine, ardent admiration, of the beautiful and sublime of nature, are among the very rarest endowments or acquirements of educated and well informed persons. His deposition will unquestionably be, that but very few among the elegant and polished part of the community, very few among the studious and learned, very few of those who are occupied in the higher professions, are intent observers of the material world, with the direct thought of its being the very basis and archetype of whatever we can know of the fair, the harmonious, and the grand; with a direct wish and study, therefore, to have the economy of the mind, as to taste and imagination, and partly as to intellect itself, formed and modified in accordance to it; and with a feeling that there is, through all nature, some mysterious element like soul, which comes, with a deep significance, to mingle itself with their own conscious being.

Nevertheless, there is a proportion of cultivated minds, (and we must reckon, inclusively or additionally, an extremely few spirits but slightly cultivated in a strictly literary sense, yet strongly instinct with genius) that find, in the wide field of nature, something indefinitely more than a mere indifferent ground on which to prosecute the journey and accomplish the ordinary business of life. They find it a scene marked all over with mystical figures, the prints and traces, as it were, of the frequentation and agency of superior spirits. They find it sometimes concentrating their faculties to curious and minute inspection, sometimes dilating them to the expansion of vast and magnificent forms; sometimes beguiling them out of all precise recognition of material realities, whether small or great, into visionary musings, and habitually and in all ways conveying into the mind, trains and masses of ideas of an order not to be acquired in the schools, and exerting a modifying and assimilating influence on the whole mental economy.

Now a clear intellectual illustration of all this might fairly

assume the title of "The Philosophy of Nature." Such a work would not, perhaps, have been required to commence with the very elements of the philosophy of the mind, or an abstruse investigation into the principles of sublimity and beauty. It might, perhaps, not improperly begin with inferences from the striking and obvious fact, repeatedly dwelt on by philosophers and poets, that in the constitution of the material world, the Creator's intentions were much beyond a provision for mere necessity and plain utility, in the strict sense of those terms; that it was determined there should be, in the mundane economy for man, something besides the means of physical well-being, something besides moral order, and even religious truth: that the system was made to include a marvellous provision for taste and imagination, and for an infinity of pleasing emotions excited through the medium of these faculties. The comprehensive inference, capable of being established in several forms and illustrations, is plainly this, that the human mind should not be insensible to this signally remarkable part of the divine economy, but should be both passively and actively responsive to it.

A rapid general view might then be taken of the actual state of the human mind, past and present, as to its modes and degrees of sensibility to this grand circumstance in the Creator's work. It might be shown in what manner this sensibility has appeared to manifest itself in various nations, in the character of their philosophy and their superstitions, of their poetry and other fine arts. Such a survey would contribute to ascertain the influence of civilization in bringing this otherwise nearly dormant sensibility into an effective state. And it would, alas! too opprobriously show how easily this fine faculty may be perverted into superstition and idolatry. There would sometimes occur, during this review, the very remarkable fact of this sensibility's acquiring, when converted into superstition, tenfold the poignancy it ever had before; tribes of human beings, who would have been but feebly impressed by the beauty and grandeur of nature in itself, or as a work of God, being enthusiastic for that beauty and sublimity just when, and so far as, profaned into the materials of a false religion. Thus men obtained something like the accomplishment of the expectation of our first parents, a more vivid perception, by means of their sin, of what was fair and sublime.

The supposed work might inquire what class of the beauties, that may be comprehended within the wide term "scenery," may have had the greatest power over susceptible minds. And it might be shown how the different orders of genius are attracted and modified respectively by those different classes of nature's exhibitions.

It would be a matter of very great interest to determine, under what conditions this influence of nature, where it does actually operate on the taste and imagination, shall also be salutary in a *moral* respect. It has been a favourite doctrine with many men of sensibility and genius, that these captivations of nature are absolutely and almost necessarily conducive to the moral rectitude of the mind; that they unconditionally tend to purify, to harmonize, and to exalt, the principles and the affections. If the maintainers of this opinion, so kind to our nature, had not examined the human mind enough to know, from its very constitution, that in some modes and degrees of its depravity, it not only may fail to be corrected by the perception of these charms of nature, but may receive their influence so that it shall augment the depravity,—it is strange that their faith was not shaken by the notorious fact, that many fine geniuses of the very class most alive to the beauty and sublimity of nature, poets and painters, have been among the most profligate of men;—not to notice that the inhabitants of some of the most paradisaical and romantic sections of the earth, are among the most basely corrupt of the whole human race. Let any man recollect what he has read and heard of the inhabitants of the most exquisite countries on the Mediterranean.

Another object of the supposed inquiry, would be to determine what mode of training from childhood, what kind of locality for residence, what studies and occupations, would most effectually dispose and gratify a mind possessed of the requisite native sensibility, for feeling these finer influences of the material world. It would also be a very capital object to teach the art and habit of *observing* the scenery of nature;—an instruction which might, with the greatest propriety, be accompanied by an emphatical censure of the careless stupidity of the man who can, for half a century, carry about the world a soul, accommodated with the organs of sight and hearing, and scarcely twenty times in that whole lapse of duration, fix an intense, examining, prolonged attention, on

any of the innumerable displays exhibited in the elegance and grandeur of the creation.

It would be a gratifying and an easy part of the undertaking to show, chiefly by means of well-selected examples, the vast advantage to eloquence, and indeed to all serious, moral, and religious instruction,—derivable in the form of striking analogies, happy illustrations, and a diction full of colour and life,—from having the prodigious world without the mind, brought, in its representative imagery, to be an ideal world, almost as rich, within it.

In the last place, it would be proper, in some part of such a work, to caution men of genius, who both perceive the palpable material beauty and grandeur of the creation, and feel, in the contemplation, the influence as of some more refined and ideal element, far beyond the perception of the senses, against suffering themselves to be deluded into a notion that this abstracted and elevated mode of feeling is something so analogous to *religion* as to render it of less importance to attain that distinct and diviner sentiment. The fine enthusiasm of this feeling made some ancient, and has made some modern philosophers, content with acknowledging, as supreme in the universe, some kind of all-pervading spirit *less than a real intelligence*. And among certain modern poets, we have heard of a mystical spiritualization of the earth and the heavens, which, under the denomination of *physiopathy*, was to be regarded as the most refined mode of religion, and peculiarly adapted to the most subtle and purified human spirits, though it was less than an acknowledgment of absolute intelligence in the object adored!—It is not, however, against this that, we particularly mean the caution; but against the delusion, in minds firmly believing in a God, of the self-flattery that being exceedingly enchanted and elevated in contemplating his works, must of itself necessarily be, in effect, identical with devotion towards Him.

These paragraphs may serve as a slight rudimental suggestion of the topics of an investigation which, in proper hands, might be interesting and valuable;—most eminently so, if it were possible to compel to such a task, for instance, one genius that, more than any other, has sojourned on that frontier, where the material and the ideal worlds join and combine their elements; that has seen those elements, as it were, mutually interfused, in a state of assimilation more in-

timate than mere analogy. It may not have been with a very sanguine hope of finding such a service performed that we took up the present work ; we did, however, reckon on a certain measure of systematic and continuous investigation ; but we soon perceived that the lively author was not at all enamoured of regular and hard labour. We found he had been injudicious rather than intentionally deceptive, in the choice of a title of so grave and high import. His work was designed for a discursive and amusing miscellany, rather than an elaborate disquisition : and if some title, indicative of this, had been adopted, instead of the term of large profession and assumption, "Philosophy," the reader might have had no great cause to complain ; for it contains, though in the most dissipated and desultory form it is possible to conceive, a great number of sprightly sentiments, with a multitude of slight notices of facts, places, and remarkable persons ; and the whole is decorated with a liberal sprinkling of classical quotation. The writer is evidently a man of cultivated taste, of very extensive reading, and of active, buoyant fancy. We only regret that he should never have cared to know there are such things as order in thinking, and method in composition.

He introduces himself in an unassuming, ingenuous, and, therefore, conciliatory manner.

"The following pages are the result of hours stolen from an application to higher interests, and from the severity of graver subjects.—They were written in the privacy of retirement, among scenes worthy the pen of Virgil, and the pencil of Lorraine:—Scenes, which afford perpetual subjects for meditation to all those who take a melancholy pleasure in contrasting the dignified simplicity of nature, with the vanity, ignorance, and presumption of man.

" 'There is no one,' says one of the best and soundest moralists of our age, 'there is no one, however limited his powers, who ought not to be actuated by a desire of leaving something behind him which should operate as an evidence that he once existed.'—During those hours of peaceful enjoyment, in which these pages were composed, such was the ambition by which the writer was animated. Upon revising what he has written, however, and comparing it with those ideas of excellence, which, in no very courteous language, whisper a knowledge of what abler pens than his would have written, on a subject so well selected for eliciting all the best energies of genius, he is awed from any expectation of an honourable distinction ; and nothing supplies the place of those golden dreams which once delighted him, but the satisfaction of having passed, happily and innocently, hours which would otherwise have been listless, useless, and unnumbered."

We do not well comprehend why, unless the author suffered some physical disability for roving, his hours should necessarily have been listless, in such scenes, though he had *not* been stimulated by this ambition, and animated by these golden dreams. Are, then, the charms of nature so passionately and poetically chanted through several hundred pages, in truth, after all, so feeble, that even their "fond enthusiast" would soon cease to feel their power, were they not so fortunate as to become the accessories of his vanity or ambition? When we see the pupil and devotee of nature, apparently insensible that he is wandering or that he is fixed to the spot; when we perceive his eye sometimes arrested and fixed in its gaze, as if by some enchantment, and sometimes in a "fine frenzy rolling;" when we are fearing and avoiding to disturb him by a movement or a word, as we should a person engaged in an act of religious worship; when we are envying the rapture with which he contemplates the beauty of the groves, and listens to their music, or beholds the torrent, the mountain, or the vast landscape;—what! are we soon to find out that the vital sentiment, the predominant idea in all this enthusiasm, has been no other than the anticipation of the praise to be got by a fine printed description of these objects, and of the tasteful delirium into which they have rapt him?—And then as to what the quoted and approved "moralist" says;—doubtless every man should endeavour to do so much good, that some part or trace of it will necessarily stay behind him, when he quits the world: but if it is meant that the actuating motive in such exertion ought to be ambition to secure a monument to his fame, we think it must have been a lying oracle that this so excellent a moralist had consulted.

But it will seem trifling to have noticed these matters in the introduction, when the reader finds that the whole work swarms with all the peccadilloes with which carelessness, versatile fancy, random wildness of declamation, and a morality without a sufficiently fixed standard, could furnish it.

No critic can attempt the book in the ordinary methods of the profession. It is perfectly without plan in either fact or pretension. It has no divisions, except that all the paragraphs are distinguished by Roman numerals, to the amount of between four and five hundred. In some places there is a small degree of sequence and relation among half a dozen of these

neighbour paragraphs : but, taking the whole work together, we think it would be possible, without impairing the book in point of regular connexion, to put the series in twenty very different orders of succession. And yet, from whatever cause, we think we have never had a feeling so tolerant for so unpardonable a contempt of arrangement. For one thing, the subject itself is rich and attractive, whether exhibited in order or confusion : and indeed our author would plead, if called rigorously to account, that he has, in this disorder, imitated nature herself, who throws her multitudinous productions in the most promiscuous manner over the terrestrial scene. He is, besides, we think, in a very considerable degree, a real enthusiast for nature ; and therefore he gains a good deal of that favour which is always attracted by what appear to be genuine avowals of passion for a deserving object :—at the same time there is not a little of what we must regard as very extravagant, and suspect of being downright extravagance prepense. The principal thing, however, that prevents the reader's weariness, and beguiles the critic's anger, is, that this extensive tract of utter confusion is not a mere rhapsody of sentiment : it is crowded with brief references to matters of fact which are well worth knowing. The excursive manner in which the author pursues his general object, carries him and his readers into every part of the globe ; and though this " racing and chasing " would be unnecessary and undesirable, and we might endure to be kept much more still, if we were in the company of a veritable philosopher, it must be confessed that the lively talk of our author does better as the accompaniment of these excursions, than it would without them. We are entertained with the transient views of grand natural objects, of the present or ancient state of places memorable in history, of the peculiar aspects of various picturesque regions, or of the monumental relics that give occasion to recall to memory the great human actors or thinkers of past times. We have, besides, animated characters and eulogiums of the most distinguished poets of nature, and notices of the most celebrated landscape painters.

The width of the author's excursions comprehends almost all that is the most remarkable in the natural scenery of the whole earth. His reading of books of travels must have been prodigious ; and with the finest of what we may call the home

scenery, he appears to be personally familiar. The grand transient phenomena of the elements do not escape his attention in his range. He sometimes speculates very briefly on their causes, in a way rather to show that he has read the conjectures and theories on the subject, than that he has scientifically studied them. He greatly prefers, and indeed is justified by the design of his work in preferring, moral and sentimental descants to any thing approaching to strictly philosophical disquisition. He has reflections and emotions to express at every place and on every subject; and considering the unlaboured, uninvestigating strain of thought and feeling which he revels in, we almost wonder there is not a greater degree of sameness.

By the plan of his work, he crowds the dominion of Nature with even more than honestly belongs to her, for in rambling among the riches of the physical region, he is continually finding matters of literature and art thrown in his way; and in fantastic, sudden, and endless changes, he sports the character of critic or historian, mingled with that of antiquary, virtuoso, or ranting enthusiast. Sometimes he will be a sober geographer, then he is called upon to estimate the respective merits of the orders of architecture; next it is violets and roses, and birds of paradise, and music, and beauty, and all for love; immediately at hand, however, are battles, and thunders, and whirlwinds, and inundations, and earthquakes, and volcanic fires; next in adventure in the regions of *Aurora Borealis*, and thence a desperate plunge to the bottom of the ocean; but quickly emerging, this volatile and wayward spirit probably goes to study philosophy and poetry in India.—No transitions of gay, and rapid, and brilliant confusion that any reader can have previously imagined, will be found, when he comes to the book itself, to have been too fantastic an anticipation of its character.

There is frequently a considerable intermingling of apparently devotional sentiment: it will not be wondered at if this sentiment has too little of the definite character of religious faith; and if there are many heedless expressions, assumptions, and implications, not very compatible with a cautiously strict adherence to the oracles of revelation, though doubtless clear of any intentional discordance with them. The general spirit of the work is rather too much like a worship alternately of nature itself, and of the God of nature, as divested of any

other character in which the inhabitants of this world have to contemplate him.

There is much amiable moral sentiment in the work. The author is a zealous inculcator of peace, and all the principles and duties of justice and charity. He has also the Greek and Roman spirit of liberty.

XV.

I R E L A N D.

The Stranger in Ireland, or a Tour in the Southern and Western Parts of that Country, in the Year 1805. By JOHN CARR, Esq.

MR. CARR is a traveller whom any sensible observer would like to accompany a few hundred miles. He possesses, in perfection, one qualification, for which many men who have more curiosity than spirit or address, will envy him, and very justly envy him; a happy mixture of confidence, adroitness, and insinuation. By means of this he obtains access to every place and every person without the smallest difficulty. The moment he arrives at any place as a perfect stranger, he seems to inform himself of everything which it would be desirable to inspect, and the next moment he is introduced to the object of curiosity as readily as if he had lived on the spot twenty years, and knew every person there. He enters with equal ease the peasant's cabin, the country ale-house, the city-hotel, and the splendid mansion of nobility. No apprehensive awkwardness detains him at the gate of a great man's house, hesitating some minutes before he ventures to ring the bell, as many a poor scholar, or rustic man of taste, and even many a philosopher would do, while he tried to inspirit himself by recollecting the maxims of Epictetus, or the noble sentiments of modern doctors on the subject of the equality of mankind. He presents himself with an air perfectly unembarrassed, and the "pampered menial" skips along the hall to announce he has, no doubt, some old familiar acquaintance of my lord. If, on the introduction, my lord should amidst his complaisance, show any little degree of grave doubtful inquisitiveness, Mr. Carr advances with such a frank and gallant air, that formal ceremony is ashamed to stay in the room, and quickly takes itself off.

The travelling vehicles in some parts of Ireland are justly described as miserable conveyances, and there is many a worthy English gentleman that would deny himself the sight of the most beautiful scenes, if he must visit them under the pains and penalties of being jammed, and rattled, and tossed, and stared at, in a jingle, a noddy, or a jaunting car. Our author, though no stranger to the luxury of easy or splendid carriages, was capable of very properly despising a temporary inconvenience, if any gratification of his taste for the beautiful or the sublime was to be obtained by enduring it. And though a connoisseur in matters of good living, and especially an excellent judge of wines, he could make himself very easy and pleasant over the most homely viands, in those wild situations, where it would have been absurd to complain that the hostess had not studied any large volume on the art of cookery, and had not a larder or cellar ample enough to turn such study to any great practical account. With the exception of a few such slight inconveniences, no traveller ever went on under a more continual sunshine of good fortune than Mr. Carr, according to his lively narrative. The "Green Island" seems to have arrayed itself in all its beauties to receive him, and the utmost politeness of its inhabitants met him at every stage. Nor did these gratifying circumstances fail to produce the due effect on the traveller, whose good-humour would appear to have been but very few times interrupted. This good-humour sparkles out in a continual series of light pleasantries; and though we would not harshly censure the gayety which an extensive view of an unhappy nation did not repress, yet we cannot help thinking that a philanthropy of the most elevated kind would occasionally have been pensive, where Mr. Carr is very sprightly, and that a refined love of justice would have been severe and indignant, in a few instances in which he is extremely tolerant.

Mr. Carr's intellectual qualifications are well adapted to that kind of travelling which the present volume exhibits. He does not survey a country with a view to form or illustrate moral or political theories, or to select the physical subjects of scientific investigation. It is not in the particular character of naturalist, virtuoso, antiquarian, or statesman, that he travels, nor exactly in the character of philosopher, but simply in that of a man of sense and taste, who wishes fairly to see and hear whatever is most deserving of attention, and to write a spirit-

ed description and narration of what he happens to observe. We certainly could have wished, on some occasions, a little more grave research, at the same time that we deprecate that pedantry which cannot make a remark without extending it into a dissertation. It is with a very ill will, we own, that we accompany a traveller, who regularly at every town he comes to, or at every old heap of stones near the road, plants himself in form to make a long speech. Mr. Carr generally seizes with quickness and accuracy the characteristic peculiarities of the people, and of local situations, while he passes from place to place with a celerity which gives us the idea of scampering.

In the preface, and in several other parts of the book, he takes pains to apprise the reader, that none of his observations on the state of Ireland are to be construed as referring to political questions, or as intimating any kind of opinion on the causes of the late melancholy events in that country. Probably this is a well-judged forbearance, in a work like the present. But we earnestly wish some liberal Englishman, who has been long conversant with mankind and with the speculations relating to their interests, who is equally free from superstitious veneration for old practices and from a rage for novelty and hazardous experiments, who is pure from the infection of party interest, and dares to arraign indifferently any party or every party at the bar of absolute justice, would traverse Ireland expressly with a view to form a comprehensive estimate of the moral and political condition and wants of the people ; and then present to the public the assemblage of facts, together with the observations which he had been most prompted to make, while those facts were before him.

The first chapter narrates the journey from London, (as it should seem) to the entrance of the bay of Dublin, and it makes us perfectly acquainted with the dispositions of the traveller. Our readers never met with a more gay and animated gentleman in their lives. He never lets himself be long disconcerted by untoward circumstances. If for a moment his indignation is excited by "those detestable corrupt harpies called custom-house officers," he almost immediately forgets them. And even the pains of sympathy, which he sometimes feels, do not become troublesome to the reader, by producing long sentimental declamations. The tragical objects which occasionally interrupt the course of his pleasantry,

do not in the least haunt him afterwards. Though decorously serious, or at least demure, in the house of mourning, he can laugh, dance, and sing, as soon as he has quitted it.

The first chapter is marked by almost all the characteristics which distinguish Mr. Carr's manner of writing travels. The descriptions are quick, clear, and lively. He marks so well the prominent circumstances of each situation or society, that he really makes his reader his companion : and this we deem very high praise. At the same time we are disposed to complain, that he rather too often introduces from his memory, at the suggestion of some very slight association of thought, stories which might quite as well have been put in any other part of the book, or in no part of it. These may sometimes be curious in themselves, like the circumstance of Mr. Bolton's wager in Paris, (p. 6,) and might do very well to keep up the chat with his associates in the coach ; but the reader of a costly book of travels will not be so patient. He wants information strictly relating to the place which the traveller has thought it worth while to visit and describe, and can find miscellaneous anecdotes at any time, in any old volume of a magazine. We might complain too, that our author's lavish eulogiums of all the people of rank that happen to be civil to him, have sometimes made us a little splenetic. We certainly are pleased with his good fortune in meeting so luckily with my Lady Tuite, &c. &c. ; and with his pathetic gratitude for slices of broiled mutton (especially as it was Welch mutton,) most seasonably given him when he was nearly famished in the packet ; but when we are told he made on the instant a solemn vow, that all his readers should be informed of this most rare bounty, we cannot but wish his conscience had permitted him to break it. We have a better opinion of Mr. Carr, than to think if Pat M'Cann, or Judith M'Nabb, or some such responsible personage, had divided the little stock of provisions with him, he would not have been *grateful* ; but we greatly doubt whether he would have been so *eloquent*.

Now and then we meet with matters so trivial, that we are sorry a man of sense should have condescended to record them ; for instance, the story about the boots, page 24. Nothing can tend more effectually to bring the writing of travels into contempt, than to occupy splendid quarto pages with incidents, which a company of louts at a pot-house must be reduced to a very great scarcity of subjects, before any of them

would think it worth while to mention. Our author is so determined from the outset, to have something *funny*, every few pages at least, that he will pick up the slightest facts or the slenderest witticisms for that purpose, rather than go soberly on his journey. About every mile post he stops to laugh, and insists that his readers shall join him, whether they can or not. Sometimes, indeed, we readily perform our part of this ceremony; as when he mentions, page 31, that "the secretary of a celebrated English agricultural society, received orders from its committee, to procure several copies of Mr. and Miss Edgeworth's Essay on Irish Bulls, upon the first appearance of that admirable book, for the use of the members in their labours for improving the breed of cattle."

After escaping from what he calls oddly enough, "that consummation of human misery, a cabin after a short voyage," he reaches Dublin, and frisks round a considerable part of the city before dinner, admiring, as every stranger will admire, several of the streets and squares, which are allowed to be among the noblest in Europe. His extensive previous travels enabled him to form a comparative judgment with great advantage. But these proud exhibitions of wealth and taste cease to please a humane traveller, as soon as he beholds the hideous contrast between them and the dwellings and entire condition of the poor. It is melancholy to see in the immediate neighbourhood of all this splendour, the ample proofs how little the prosperous and powerful part of mankind care for the miserable. We do not pretend to believe that the resources of the rich, and the power of the state, could banish poverty, and the whole of its attendant and consequent evils, from a great city; but it is impossible to see such sinks of filth, such a multitude of wretched, ragged, and half-famished creatures, crowded into alleys and cellars, and such a prodigious number of mendicants, without pronouncing the severest condemnation on the idle and luxurious opulence, and the strange state policy, which can preserve, year after year, a cool indifference to all this misery.

Mr. Carr visited the beautiful scenes in the county of Wicklow, and we should have thought meanly of his taste, if he had adopted, in describing them, a language of less animated admiration. We should have required this language from a man the most parsimonious of strong epithets; but from our author we have a special claim to emphatical terms superla-

tively magnified, when speaking of grand subjects, because he sometimes applies emphatical terms, especially the word *infinite*, to very little ones. We have hinted before that brilliant expressions are elicited from him with wonderful facility and copiousness, whenever he comes within the precincts or the apartments of an opulent villa. In page 200, he describes a visit to such a villa, the lady of which patronizes a school of industry for girls. This school it seems is in its nature a losing concern, and costs her some inconsiderable sum every year. In the contemplation of this generosity, Mr. Carr is so affected, that his thoughts are transported for *once* to the joys of heaven, as the unquestionable reversion awaiting such transcendent goodness. We were half inclined to take exception to this language, as somewhat too strong for the occasion; but we stood corrected for this feeling, on reading the paragraphs immediately following, which describe a magnificent and most extravagantly expensive luxury in the appendages of this mansion. That after such a consumption of money, any small sum should have been reserved for a school of industry, and that amidst such a "voluptuous" paradise, there should have been any recollection of so humble a concern, appeared to us an excess of bounty and condescension, which Mr. Carr's panegyric had too feebly applauded. But though the traveller's amiable propensity to celebrate good actions becomes peculiarly strong in the congenial neighbourhood of rank and elegance, it would be unjust to deny that he is capable of discerning excellence in subordinate stations of life. A little earlier in his book he gives an example, which we will transcribe, and we cannot help it if any reader should deem this a specimen of much more rare and costly virtue, than that which we have joined the author in admiring.

"The following little anecdote will prove that magnanimity is also an inmate of an Irish cabin. During the march of a regiment, the Honourable Captain P——, who had the command of the artillery baggage, observing that one of the peasants, whose car and horse had been pressed for the regiment, did not drive as fast as he ought, went up to him and struck him; the poor fellow shrugged up his shoulders, and observed there was no occasion for a blow, and immediately quickened the pace of his animal. Some time afterwards, the artillery officer having been out shooting all the morning, entered a cabin for the purpose of resting himself, when he found the very peasant whom he had struck, at dinner with his wife and family: the man, who was very large and powerfully made, and whose abode was solitary, might have taken fatal revenge upon the officer, in-

stead of which, immediately recognizing him, he chose the best potato out of his bowl, and presenting it to his guest, said, 'There, your honour, oblige me by tasting a potato, and I hope it is a good one, but you should not have struck me; a blow is hard to bear.'—Pp. 150, 151.

By means of a wide diversity of narrative and anecdote, Mr. Carr furnishes a striking picture of the Irish character, as it appears in the lower ranks throughout the middle and southern parts of the country. His manner of exhibiting the national character, by means of a great assortment of well-chosen facts, and short conversations, gives a much more lively representation than any formal philosophic work, composed chiefly of general observations. At the same time, it will not be unjust to remark, that only a very small portion of toil and reflection is necessary for executing such a work. Writing travelling memoranda was a pleasant employment of many intervals and evenings, which would otherwise have been unoccupied and tedious; and, to form a volume, the author had not much more to do than to revise these memoranda, and add certain extracts from old and new books, with a few calculations and general statements. The book is such an enumeration of particulars, and series of short sketches, as a philosopher would wish to obtain in order to deduce, by abstracting the essence of the whole mixture, a comprehensive character of the people and the country. It is like an irregular heap of materials which the artist must melt together, in order to cast one complete and well-proportioned figure.

It will be obvious to the readers of this volume, that the Irish people have a national character widely different from that of the English. And it will be the utmost want of candour, we think, to deny that they are equal to any nation on the earth, in point of both physical and intellectual capability. A liberal system of government, and a high state of mental cultivation, would make them the Athenians of the British empire. By what mystery of iniquity, or infatuation of policy, has it come to pass, that they have been doomed to unalterable ignorance, poverty, and misery, and reminded one age after another of their dependence on a protestant power, sometimes by disdainful neglect, and sometimes by the infliction of plagues. The temper of our traveller is totally the reverse of any thing like querulousness or faction; but he occasionally avows, both in sorrow and in anger, the irresistible impression made, by what he witnessed, on an honest, and we

believe we may say, generous mind. He clearly sees that the lower order of the people, whatever might be their disposition, have in the present state of things absolutely no power to redeem themselves from their deplorable degradation. Without some great, and as yet unattempted, and perhaps unprojected, plan for the relief of their pressing physical wants, they may remain another century in a situation, which a Christian and a philanthropist cannot contemplate without a grief approaching to horror. Their popery and their vice will be alleged against them ; if the punishment is to be that they shall be left in that condition wherein they will inevitably continue popish and vicious still, their fate is indeed mournful ; vengeance could hardly prompt a severer retribution. Mr. Carr approves of the Union, and faintly expresses his hope that great benefits may yet result from it ; but plainly acknowledges that a very different system of practical administration must be adopted, before Ireland can have any material cause to be grateful for this important measure.

It is a particular excellence of the book before us, that the diversified facts are so well exhibited, as to enable the reader to delineate for himself, without any further assistance of the author, the principal features of the Irish character ; insomuch that were he to visit Ireland, he would find that the previous reading of the book had made him completely at home in that country. The author however was willing to give a short abstract of his scattered estimates of Irish qualities, in the following summary. Allowing that the national character does really comprise these properties, we must however think that impartial justice would more strongly have marked some of the vices, which considerably shade this constellation of fine qualities.

“ With few materials for ingenuity to work with, the peasantry of Ireland are most ingenious, and with adequate inducements, laboriously indefatigable : they possess, in general, personal beauty and vigour of frame ; they abound with wit and sensibility, though all the avenues to useful knowledge are closed against them ; they are capable of forgiving injuries, and are generous even to their oppressors ; they are sensible of superior merit, and submissive to it ; they display natural urbanity in rags and penury, are cordially hospitable, ardent for information, social in their habits, kind in their disposition, in gayety of heart and genuine humour unrivalled, even in their superstition presenting a union of pleasantry and tenderness ; warm and constant in their attachments, faithful and incorruptible in their engagements, innocent, with the power of sensual enjoyment perpetually within their reach ; observant of sexual modesty,

though crowded within the narrow limits of a cabin ; strangers to a crime which reddens the cheek of manhood with horror ; tenacious of respect ; acutely sensible of, and easily won by kindness. Such is the peasantry of Ireland ; I appeal not to the affections or the humanity, but to the justice of every one to whom chance may direct these pages, whether men so constituted present no character which a wise government can mould to the great purpose of augmenting the prosperity of the country, and the happiness of society. Well might Lord Chesterfield, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, exclaim, ' God has done every thing for this country, man nothing.' "—Pp. 292, 293.

The author gives plenty of specimens of the ignorance, the fanaticism, the legends, and the superstition, of the lowest rank of the people ; and while we read them, we are indignant at the insinuation which occurs, we think more than once, against the wisdom or necessity of a *proselyting* spirit on the part of the protestants. The view of such a state of the human mind ought to incite all pious protestants to move heaven and earth, if it were possible, to annihilate that monster of error and corruption which produces and sanctions, and will perpetuate in every country where it continues to prevail, that degradation of which the ignorant Irish are an example. But we cannot help perceiving, in several passages of the present volume, that our sprightly traveller is disposed to regard Revelation itself as rather a light matter ; we cannot wonder, therefore, at his being unconscious how important is the difference between an erroneous faith and worship, and the true. One of these passages is in page 33 : " In God's name, let the Peruvians derive themselves from the sun ; let the Chinese boast of the existence of their empire eight thousand years before the creation of the world, according to our calculation," &c. If a man really holds the opinion implied in such expressions as these, (the palpable profaneness of which, too, deserves the severest condemnation,) we ought not to be surprised, that in the same volume or chapter the reclaiming of bogs is represented as an object to be strenuously promoted, and the reclaiming of miserable papists as an object for which it betrays some defect of judgment to show any great degree of zeal. Yet, on recollection, we *do* a little wonder that Mr. Carr, though he should set aside all considerations of purely religious advantage, here or hereafter, should not see the importance, in relation to *political economy*, of the lower order being raised to that decent state of intellectual and moral improvement which there is not the smallest chance of

their attaining while under the influence of a superstition which governs them by besotting them. While, however, we condemn such indifference, especially when indifference affects the character of superior wisdom, we equally condemn all corrupt and all violent methods of advancing the protestant cause. It is not by tempting the conscience of the papist with a pitiful sum of money, nor by forcibly interrupting the follies of his public worship, nor by making him, for the sake of his religion, the subject of continual derision, nor by unnecessarily excluding him from any advantage, that we could wish to see genuine Christianity aided, in its warfare against that wretched paganism, into which what was once religion is found degenerated, among all very ignorant papists in every country. We cannot but regret that both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of Ireland should have been, for the most part, unacquainted with all apostolical methods of attempting the conversion of the catholics. And it is melancholy that the *generality* of the ostensible ministers of religion at present in that country, should be so very little either disposed or qualified to promote this great work. We happen to know, that there are *some* brilliant exceptions to this remark ; the lustre of whose character, if it cannot prevail to any distance, yet defines and exposes the obscurity which surrounds them.

Our traveller was attentive to collect any kind of useful or amusing information, respecting the several places which he visited, and respecting the country at large. He is of opinion, that Ireland is of a temperature probably more mild and equal than that of any other country. Its unrivalled verdure is owing to its western position, where its hills are the first interruption to the clouds of the Atlantic, in consequence of which the proportion of rainy weather is much greater than in England. We presume this circumstance would render it, with the advantage of an equal cultivation, more richly productive of almost all the most valuable kinds of vegetables ; and Arthur Young, we recollect, has given it as his opinion, that the soil of Ireland is more fertile, acre against acre, than that of this country. The agriculture is described as considerably progressive on the whole, in spite even of the singularly hapless condition of multitudes of its most valuable labourers.

One of the most curious and interesting parts of the book is the account of the interior of the Irish bogs. In digging to a great depth in one of them, there were found three prostrate

woods, one below another, and separated by successive deep strata of earth. Mr. Carr refers the investigation of these facts to more philosophic men, apparently afraid of the gravity of such inquiries; and lest even his momentary descent into the abyss of a bog-pit should have, on him or his readers, any such effect as that of the cave of Trophonius, he inspirits himself and them with a good story of an "embalmed cobbler," once found, with all his implements about him, in one of these places. Just in this manner a bog-digger takes his glass of whiskey before he begins.

In the narration of the hasty visit to so enchanting a place as the lakes of Killarney, we were vexed that any of the pages should be occupied about such-a-one, Esq., and a second Esquire, and a third, and so on. It lessens the charm of the description, in the same manner as the crowded quarter-sessions in the town spoiled in a degree the pleasure of being in the place itself. We could also have well spared the foolish lines of Swift, called "A Gentle Echo on Women." We are, on the contrary, delighted with the little anecdote of the huntsman, who set free a poor fawn which he had caught, because the dam followed him with tones of distress. Things like this are in harmony with the exquisite and tranquil beauty of the scene. As travellers cannot relate *all* the incidents they witness or hear of in each place which they visit, it would be the part of a judicious artist to select those which most harmonize with the character of the situation. Mr. Carr wants a good deal of improvement in this point. Not that we could have the conscience to require him to suppress all the humorous anecdotes which he hears, but we really wish that, if he should ever visit another place like Killarney, he will make such a choice of facts and anecdotes, out of the whole mass which comes before him, as to aid the emotions of sublimity and beauty which are peculiarly appropriate to the place, and which the actual observer would be ashamed of himself if he did not feel as the prevailing state of his mind, while he remained amidst this magnificence of nature. We must not, however, forbear to add, that Mr. Carr does give a very pleasing account of this noble scene, notwithstanding the spirit and tone of the description are so unfortunately interrupted, when any jokes or ludicrous incidents, those literary wild-fowl in the pursuit of which our traveller is an incomparable sportsman, happen to fly across his view.

He went to Limerick and Cork, which he describes sufficiently in detail. The shocking accounts of the house of industry at Limerick, and of the house of industry and the old gaol at Cork, will sting the principal inhabitants, we hope, through very shame, to the adoption of some more humane, more decent, and more useful regulations. On reaching Kilkenny he found "quite a jubilee bustle in the streets." The sacred flame of charity was glowing throughout all the town. It was understood that numbers of human beings were "sinking under want and misery;" and a great company of gentlemen, and other people, were convened to make a noble effort of pure Christian munificence. And in what manner, courteous reader, should you suppose the resources were to be supplied for executing the pious design? The money was obtained by means of *theatricals*, which are performed during one month every year, with an incalculable mischief, beyond all doubt, to the morals of the young people. The balance, after deducting the expenses attending the performance, is reckoned at about 200*l*. This, as we should infer, from another item in the account, is not a fourth part of the whole sum paid for entrance into the theatre; but how much of even this smaller sum would have been contributed for the *charity*, if it had not been extracted by means of this vain and noxious amusement?

Mr. Carr seems to have visited Ireland in the capacity of character-painter to the principal inhabitants. And as the other class of artists, portrait-painters, are said to keep a number of Venuses, Adonises, Apollos, &c. within sight while at their work, so we cannot be so simple as not to suspect that this moral painter has played off the same device on those who sat, and on us who are called to inspect and admire. He meets with a certain General here, at Kilkenny, whose generous patriotism may challenge the whole empire to produce an equal. In this one instance, however, Mr. Carr does not attempt to put the trick upon us; and we are thankful to him for his honesty. He might have observed a discreet silence as to the particular proof of this unrivalled generosity, and then we should have supposed this patriotism displayed itself in —; nay, should have very deeply pondered all the forms in which it could have been displayed, and tried to ascertain which is the most generous and useful. Has he built a hospital for the lame or blind? Has he remitted his poor tenants half their rents on account of a severe season? Has

he helped a great many little farmers to cultivate pieces of waste land? Or perhaps he has established large schools for the decent education of the brats of the wild Irish. No, he has done something much nobler: he has made, each year, a large volunteer subscription, towards defraying the expense of carrying on the war. Cunning Mr. Painter! always perform in this manner; and we shall not be tempted to the sin of reviling you for having taken us in.

Our readers have often heard of the late Dean Kirwan, long celebrated for his charity sermons; and if eloquence be rightly defined the art of persuading, it would appear that he must have been one of the greatest orators of modern times; for the sums collected after his sermons, amounted in all, as we are informed by Mr. Carr, to nearly sixty thousand pounds. For purposes of mischief we have often enough had occasion to see that a mere second-rate eloquence is sufficient to obtain immensely greater sums; and we have observed human nature too long to wonder at the fact; but that a sum like the one here specified should be granted to the pleadings of *charity*, does excite our wonder we own, and also our curiosity to know the exact nature of the eloquence which had so great an effect. Mr. Carr has given several pages of specimens, which he obtained with difficulty from a reverend admirer of the Dean, who had taken them down in short-hand. But whether it be, that the writer gave a cast of expression of his own to the sentences of the speaker, or whether there was a defect of taste in selecting them, or whether they were accompanied and enforced by unequal graces of delivery, or whether the great law of attraction exists in less force between money and its owners in Ireland than in other countries, or whatever other cause, of which we are not aware, contributed its influence, we acknowledge that we have some difficulty to comprehend, how a kind of oratory so very dissimilar to the noblest models of eloquence could produce the splendid result. These specimens too much remind us of the worst literary qualities of French oratory. The language has an artificial pomp, which is carried on, if we may so express it, at a certain uniform height above the thought, on all occasions; like the gaudy canopy of some effeminate oriental, which is still supported over him, with invariable and tiresome ceremony, whether he proceeds or stops, sleeps or wakes, rides or condescends to step on the ground. The images seem rather to be sought than to spring in the mind sponta-

neously, and to be chosen rather for their splendour than their appropriateness. And the train of thinking appears to have little of that distinct succession of ideas, and that logical articulation, which are requisite to impress sound conviction on the understanding. We fear, however, that we begin to descry one capital cause of the Dean's success, in something else than the *literary* merits of his oratory: and our readers will hardly avoid the same surmise when they read the following passage. Expressing his reverence for the man, "however he may differ in speculative opinions," who relieves the wretched, &c. &c., he proceeds: "Should such a man be ill-fated, here or hereafter, may his fate be light! Should he transgress, may his transgressions be unrecorded! Or if the page of his great account be stained with the weakness of human nature, or the misfortune of error, may the tears of the widow and the orphan, the tears of the wretched he has relieved, efface the too rigid and unfriendly characters, and blot out the guilt and remembrance of them for ever!" Now if an admired preacher, after a pathetic address to the passions of a numerous and wealthy auditory, many of whom had never accurately studied the doctrines of Christianity, *could* have the courage to proceed forward, and declare to them, in the name of heaven, that their pecuniary liberality to the claims of distress in general, and especially to the case of distress immediately before them, would secure them, notwithstanding their past and future unrepented and unrelinquished sins, from all danger of divine condemnation; intimating, also, that, on the extreme and improbable supposition that they *should* be consigned to the region of punishment, it would prove so light an affair as to be rather a little misfortune than an awful calamity, he might certainly persuade them to an ample contribution. But that an enlightened minister of a protestant church *could* have the courage to declare or even insinuate the pernicious sentiment, awakens our utmost astonishment. We think there can be no doubt that a certain proportion of the money collected after the address, in which such a passage as this was seriously uttered, would be paid literally as the atonement for the past crimes, and as the price of an extended license to repeat them with impunity. If the whole of the oration was powerfully persuasive, we cannot fail to attribute a large share of the success to that particular part, so soothing to apprehension, and so flattering to ignorance and corruption.

In returning towards Dublin, our author made a visit to

the house of Mr. Grattan; and he might well feel himself flattered by the welcome, and the polite attention, which he experienced there, and gratified by the mental luxuries which, we may believe, scarcely another house could have supplied. We should have been glad to receive some more particular information about this distinguished orator, than the assurance merely of his being a polite and hospitable man, an elegant scholar, and respectable in domestic relations. We should have been glad to hear something of his studies, his personal habits, his style of talking, or the manner in which he appears to meet advancing age. Yet we acknowledge it is a difficult matter for a transient visitor, who is received on terms of formal politeness, to acquire much knowledge on some of these particulars, and a matter of some delicacy to publish what he might acquire. A number of pages are occupied with passages from Mr. Grattan's speeches; some of which extracts, we believe, were supplied to Mr. Carr from memory, and therefore are probably given imperfectly. On the whole, however, these passages tend to confirm the general idea entertained of Mr. Grattan's eloquence, as distinguished by fire, sublimity, and an immense reach of thought. A following chapter is chiefly composed of similar extracts from Mr. Curran's speeches; in most of which the conceptions are expressed with more lucidness and precision than in the passages from Grattan. These specimens did not surprise, though they delighted us. We have long considered this distinguished counsellor as possessed of a higher genius than any one in his profession within the British empire.—The most obvious difference between these two great orators is, that Curran is more versatile, rising often to sublimity, and often descending to pleasantry, and even drollery; whereas Grattan is always grave and austere. They both possess that order of intellectual powers, of which the limits cannot be assigned. No conception could be so brilliant or original, that we should confidently pronounce that neither of these men could have uttered it. We regret to imagine how many admirable thoughts, which such men must have expressed in the lapse of many years, have been unrecorded, and are lost for ever. We think of these with the same feelings, with which we have often read of the beautiful or sublime occasional phenomena of nature, in past times, or remote regions, which amazed and delighted the beholders, but which we were destined never to see.

XVI.

EPIC POETRY.

The Fall of Cambria, a Poem. By JOSEPH COTTLE.

OUR times are unfavourable, to the last degree, to the writers of that kind of poetry commonly called epic; a denomination about which there has been, among critics, a vast deal of superstition—a denomination as fairly applicable, for what any of them can show to the contrary, to any poetical narration of the great military transactions that have decided the destiny of a state, as to the *Iliad*—a denomination, therefore, which might with perfect propriety have appeared in the title-page of this work, had the author deemed it worth while to be tenacious of so trifling a point of rank. The present times, we observe, are unfavourable, because a great part of the impressive power of the heroic poem obviously depends on the contrast between such transactions as it narrates, and the ordinary course of human events. We have very naturally been accustomed to calculate the effect of this sort of poem, on an assumption that the fall of great states and monarchs, the extinction and creation of imperial dynasties, the exploits of great heroes, and such conflicts of armies as transfer whole nations to a new dominion, are things of so rare occurrence as to be of themselves adapted to take possession of the utmost faculty of attention and wonder, and therefore to need nothing but the eloquence of poetry to give them an overpowering magnificence. In their plainest mode of representation they must rise before our view, it is presumed, with somewhat of the aspect of sublime mountains; the effect of their appearing in poetry will be as when those mountains are seen in the state of volcanoes. But this high advantage of the epic poem—its having the province of celebrating a class of events which, in even the humblest style of recital, would be exceedingly striking to the imagination—

is, along with so many other high and prescriptive things, totally abolished in the present age. The fall of monarchs, the end of a royal race, the catastrophe of empires—what solemn phrases these used to be in the lessons of moralists, and the declamations of orators! How many pensive and awful reflections were they expected to awaken! To what a remote, and lofty, and tragical order of ideas were we supposed to be aspiring when we uttered them! But the time is at length come for such ambitious phrases to express but the ordinary events taking place within our sight. We are now become accustomed to reckon with great confidence, at the beginning of the year, that if we live to the end of it, we shall outlive some one or other ancient kingdom that is co-existing with us on the first of January. We take not the smallest credit for any unusual foresight in the prognostication; and when the event accordingly takes place, it seems so much a matter of course that it should have happened, that it is not till after a considerable interval of reflection that the mind admits any very grave impression of its importance. The impression is not so much made by the event itself directly, as by our reflective wonder that it has impressed us so little. But both our direct and our reflective ideas of the magnitude of such an event are soon swept away by that incessant rapid progress of revolution, which is overturning another and still another throne; destroying the boundaries of states; either reducing those states to the condition of provinces of one vast rapacious empire, or supplanting their ancient institutions by new forms and names of government, and consigning the hereditary monarchs and their courts to obscurity and captivity, or driving them to the extremities and islands of Europe, or even to the other hemisphere. In this career of revolution, war has unfolded all its splendid and terrible forms, in such a crowded succession of enterprises and battles, with every imaginable circumstance of valour, skill, and destruction, that its grandest exhibitions are become familiar to us, almost to insipidity. We read or talk, over our wine or our coffee, of some great battle that has recently decided the fate of a kingdom, with an emotion nearly as transient as of an old bridge carried away in our neighbourhood by a flood, or a tree overthrown by the wind or struck with lightning. It is, even after every allowance for the natural effect of iteration and familiarity, perfectly aston-

ishing to observe what a degree of indifference has come to prevail in the general mind, at the view of events the most awful in their immediate exhibition, and the most portentous as to their consequences.

Now it is very evident that this state of the public mind must be unfriendly in the extreme, as we began by asserting, to the labours and hopes of epic poets. It is the chief object of their unfortunate task to excite the sentiments of awe and astonishment by the representation of events, for the most part, of greatly inferior magnitude to those (of the very same class) which are just sufficing to keep up our newspapers and annual registers to the competent pitch for amusing us. It is true that the poets, by going back several ages for their subjects, have the advantage of exhibiting their heroes and great transactions with that venerable aspect of antiquity which is strangely imposing to the imagination; but this is more than counterbalanced in favour of the newspapers by the momentous and direct relation of the present events to our own interests. The facts, too, of the epic narrative, instead of occupying the mind so as to withdraw its attention from the present events, have a quite contrary operation, tending rather to reflect its thoughts back to these nearer and greater objects. And this reflected attention involves comparison; which we shall be sure to make with a considerable degree of disposition to find the transactions of our own more magnificent than those of former ages. We shall thus be made to contemplate with more attention, and, through a kind of reacting pride, with more admiration, the events of the last year or month, in consequence of the poet's challenging us with a pompous display of the battles and revolutions of remote periods; so that not only we are likely to behave ill to contemporary epic poets, but even Homer himself has need of all the sanctity of antiquity, and all the surrounding throngs of devotees of every time and nation, to protect him against the pert profaneness with which we might be tempted to ask, "Where are all your conflicts on the Phrygian plain, and what is the fall of Troy, compared with what is taking place in our times about once every six months?" The author, then, of the "Fall of Cambria" will not be surprised to find himself partaking in some measure the misfortune which a revolutionary period has brought on poets, by rendering what were once accounted the most inspiring subjects, vulgar and almost insipid.

If this diminution of the interest of heroic poetry had taken place from any *other* cause, it would not perhaps have been regretted by a Christian moralist, who feels it quite time that the characters and actions which are so pernicious in fact, should cease to be attractive in description. The moral effect of exhibiting martial excellence in an attractive form would be very equivocal, even in a case with the best imaginable conditions. Some of these conditions would be, that the contest should bear the clear evidence of perfect justice on the one side, and therefore iniquity on the other; that the defenders of the just cause should fight purely from the love of justice, not from military glory, as it is called; that the chiefs among these defenders should have so much general virtue, that their valour in a just cause should not be the means of seducing us into a partiality for some vice in another part of the character; and that the perhaps equally valiant combatants on the side of injustice should be so represented as to become, by means of the other parts of their characters, or from the fact of their being on the side of injustice, so decidedly the objects of antipathy, that their bravery, however splendid, should conduce nothing towards conciliating us to the bad men, and the bad cause. It is doubtful whether a careful observance of all these conditions, in a poem which should describe with the most animated eloquence (as it might, without violating these conditions) the most brilliant achievements of war, would be enough to prevent those achievements, so described, from exciting a feeling of more complacency towards the work of destruction than ought *ever* to be entertained towards it—than it would be strictly moral to entertain towards it even in a case in which it should be attended with all conceivable circumstances of justice. But if the moral influence on the reader's mind, from a grand poetical celebration of heroes and heroic exploits, with even perfect justice on their side, a celebration, too, conducted with a strict regard to all the other conditions above suggested, would be at the best equivocal, it is quite needless to ask, what must naturally be the influence on his mind from the celebration of such wars as have actually made the grandest figure in poetry—which poetry has, at the same time, violated all the conditions on which it might be just barely pardonable to display *any*, even the most righteous war, in attractive colours.

From the general character of Mr. Cottle's writing, we should conclude with confidence, that no poet ever had a higher respect for the purest principles of morality. There is strong evidence of this in the present performance. But the subject, like almost all such subjects, involved difficulties which no dexterity could overcome. Was the subjugation of Wales by Edward the First a just or an unjust achievement? If a just one, then our feelings are engaged pointedly against justice by our sympathetic interest in the heroic and amiable character of the Welsh Prince Llewellyn, and some of his associates, and the patriotic and enthusiastic energy of the people. If it was unjust—if it was an enterprise of wicked ambition in the monarch, and wicked loyalty in his chiefs—then is it an immoral lenity that we are tempted to exercise towards these workers of iniquity, by the magnanimity and generosity which the poet frequently makes them display. It is true, he has made some of the English leaders very detestable characters; but still, the characters of the men and the enterprise are not so managed on the whole as to inspire such an entire detestation of the undertaking throughout, as we ought to feel *if* it was an iniquitous undertaking. Perhaps indeed the poet felt, and perhaps justly felt, that it would be accounted an unpardonable violation of courtesy and patriotism, to offer to English readers a work which, in celebrating a great national achievement, should represent our own country as atrociously in the wrong. But it is a striking disadvantage in the choice of a subject, that either justice must be compromised on the one hand, or a sentiment so invincible, and accounted so virtuous, as patriotism, systematically affronted on the other. We speak on the supposition of the English being, in the instance in question, completely in the wrong.—It is another serious disadvantage of the present subject, that how much soever the English invasion may appear to be in the wrong, it is evidently to the advantage of both the nations that it should be *successful*, this being the only event that could for ever put an end to their wars, and to the savage condition of their border territory; and this also promising to the minor nation incalculable advantages in point of progressive knowledge and civilization. Thus a civil war is raised among our feelings, some of which are imprecating discomfiture and punishment on the invader for his ambition, while others are desiring his success in order to the final pacification of two fiercely conflicting nations,

whose strife, it is perfectly evident, will otherwise be cruel and perpetual, and in order to the civil improvement of the aggrieved state. The poet interests us at every step for the success of Llewellyn, over whose final defeat and whose death we are compelled to mourn, as over the fall of a virtuous hero, and a just cause, detesting the royal arm that inflicted the fatal blow : and yet this sympathy is confounded by our being compelled equally to reflect, that the life and victory which we wish him, would have been, on the wider scale of humanity, a far greater disaster.

Against the radical vice of epic poetry, its giving a pernicious fascination to the exploits of war, Mr. Cottle has evidently laboured earnestly, by endeavouring to throw as much of the interest as possible into the subordinate parts of the fable, and by occupying an unusually large proportion of the work with speeches of the principal personages. Still more directly he has done it by taking occasions to introduce, formally, many solemn reflections on the essential hatefulness of war, and the vanity of those martial qualities and feats, to which, however, he will in vain admonish those whom Christianity in vain admonishes, of the folly of applying such terms as glory and immortality. It may be from the meritorious singularity of sentiments in perfect unison with the highest moral and Christian principles, in a poem celebrating the exploits of heroes, that we are tempted to consider these passages as the best, in every sense, in the work.

There is a great deal to be praised in this poem. The moral spirit of it, so far as the general exceptions we have before made do not interfere, is singularly excellent ; faithful to the supreme authority of religion, and favourable to every thing amiable and dignified. The serious and pensive reflections which form a prominent distinction of the work, are often of a kind which the wisest men are most inclined to indulge. They sometimes reach a no small degree of abstraction ; they indicate a deep sensibility, and an extremely attentive observance of its varying emotions. The narration will not perhaps be thought sufficiently rapid, but is generally very clear. The speeches will be thought much too long, notwithstanding that they are employed a good deal in carrying on the narration. Taking the narration as a whole, it is in a somewhat more settled form, perhaps, than is required in a standard epic ; but probably the author might consider himself as privileged in virtue of declining that proud title, to allow himself in a looser

arrangement of his facts, and a more digressive and episodical mode of relating them. He holds himself always at liberty to protract the story of any collateral course of transactions as long as it will furnish good materials for poetry. Yet we think that most of these collateral narrations will be found tending towards the main purpose of the story; like streams which, while wandering in distinct and even distant fields or valleys, are still winding towards a confluence. At the same time the fable has much of the simplicity of history; not attempting the intricacy and artifice of construction which distract the reader's attention between the bearings of the plot, and the intrinsic quality of the successive portions of the composition, and which make so much of the interest of the work depend on curiosity, that, when once that is satisfied, the work becomes comparatively an object of indifference.—Mr. Cottle never scruples to suspend the course of events to dilate on the moral reflections they have suggested; or to give time for a lengthened lyrical performance by the bards Caradoc or Lhyrarch, (which will not be considered as among the best parts of the work;) or to describe those grand or beautiful scenes of nature, which these descriptions prove the author to have contemplated with a fixed silent attention, a perception of something deeper than shades and colours, a reflective mysticism, if we may so call it, and a recognition of an all-pervading spirit. No doubt some of the ideas suggested amidst the imaginative musing, will appear strained and bordering on conceits; but many are within the laws of just analogy, while ingenious and subtle. Examples of both are found in Lhyrarch's "Song of the Ocean." The poet has given great variety to his descriptions, by taking full advantage of the romantic scenery in Wales; as well as of the picturesque array of war and fashion of manners in a chivalrous age. As to characters, there is such an enormous multitude of heroes going up and down throughout all literature, as to have rendered the heroic character familiar to the imagination, and to make it comparatively easy for the poet to exhibit his personages in the correct general shape and features of this character, both in its more generous and its more ferocious form. Along with this success of general delineation, we think our author has reached the higher point of giving to heroes substantially of the same order, an individual complexion of character. The poet's language is wrought with care, and is in general equally removed from meanness and classical pomp.

XVII.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE HIGHLANDERS.

Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland: to which are added, Translations from the Gaelic; and Letters connected with those formerly published. By the Author of "Letters from the Mountains."

It is a gloomy reflection which occurs to us, in contemplating the world as a very picturesque scene, that much the greatest portion of what man has contributed, and still contributes to make it so, is the result and proof of the perverted condition of the understanding and morality of the species. If we look at the more palpable and material division of the things by which that species have given to the world an aspect very striking to the imagination, it is False Religion that has raised so many superb temples, of which the smallest remaining ruins bear an impressive character of grandeur; that has prompted the creation, from shapeless masses of substance, of so many beautiful or monstrous forms, representing fabulous super-human and divine beings; and that has produced some of the most stupendous works intended as abodes, or monuments, of the dead. It is the evil next in eminence, War, that has caused the earth to be embossed with so many thousands of massy structures in the form of towers and defensive walls—so many remains of ancient camps—so many traces of the labours by which armies overcame the obstacles opposed to them by rivers, rocks, or mountains—and so many triumphal edifices raised to perpetuate the glory of conquerors. It is the oppressive Self-importance of imperial tyrants, and of their inferior commanders of human toils, that has erected those magnificent residences which make a far greater figure in our imagination, than the collective dwellings of the humbler population of a whole continent, and that has in some spots thrown the surface of the earth into new forms. Had an en-

lightened understanding and uncorrupt moral principles always and universally reigned among mankind, not one of all these mighty operations, the labours of unnumbered millions, under the impulse and direction of a prodigious aggregate of genius and skill, would even have been thought of. Not one stone would have been laid of Pagan temple or embattled fortress, of mausoleum, or triumphal arch, or tyrant's palace. The ground occupied by the once perfect, and now ruined, mansions of the gods at Athens, or Palmyra, or Thebes, or Rome, the sites of the Egyptian pyramids, of the Roman amphitheatres, and of the palaces of the Alhambra or the Seraglio, might, some of them, have been cultivated as useful pieces of garden-ground, and some of them covered, from early ages till now, with commodious, but not showy, dwellings of virtuous families, or plain buildings for the public exercises of the true religion. In short, the world would have been a scene incomparably more happy and more morally beautiful, but it would have been without a vast multitude of objects that now conspire to make a grand, and even awful, impression on the imagination.

If we fix our attention on the other class of things contributed by the human species, to give what we call a picturesque character to the world—the class supplied by their personal condition and manners—we find that in this part also of that character the most striking appearances are those which manifest error and moral evil. What is it, in this view, that most powerfully seizes the imagination? It is the wild and formidable character and habits of savages and barbarians,—of North-American Indians, South-Sea Islanders, Arabs, and Tartars: It is the monstrous forms of national polity, or of subordinate social institution: It is the contrast of the various systems of manners, rivals perhaps in absurdity: It is whatever is most pompous, most fantastic, or most vicious, in the ceremonial appointments of civilized and uncivilized society: It is that ferocious aspect of hostility with which the human tribes all over the earth are constantly looking at one another, and those dreadful collisions in which myriads are perishing every month; but perhaps, above all, it is their superstitions: for these, by their nature, partake more than all the other things enumerated, of that solemnity and mystery which have so mighty a power over the imagination.

We now come towards the purpose of this prolix array of

common places, by the double observation,—that the advance of just thinking and right moral principles will, proportionably, annihilate a great deal that is very striking and romantic in the now existing economy of the human species,—but that we ought to be pleased for these picturesque aspects to vanish, if their disappearance be owing to the removal of that intellectual or moral perversion by which they were produced. The complacent feeling here demanded, as a tribute due to the excellence of truth and moral rectitude, is, of course, only called for at the disappearance of such striking features of the world as belong to the latter division, that is, of such as are presented in the personal condition and habits of the human species, and indicate, so long as they appear, the continued operation of the evil causes from which they have arisen. For as to those material objects produced by the prevalence of evil, and which are so fascinating to the imagination,—the pyramids, the ruined temples, and the vast works that remain as monuments of former wars, we suppose almost all men may agree in wishing they might continue to exist to the latest periods of the world, to assist historians in representing, and a distant posterity in a happier age in believing, the true state of mankind in former periods. But the picturesque forms of practical superstition, and of any other thing in the human economy which indicates and results from a still operating perversion of understanding or moral sentiments, ought not to be deplored when they vanish to return no more,—even though they were as captivating to the fancy, as comparatively innoxious, and combined with as many virtues, half virtues, and romantic fine qualities, as the superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland.

Our old friend Mrs. Grant is some trifle below our standard, on this subject. She acknowledges, with full conviction, that that mode of personal character, (comprising notions, moral sentiments, and practical habits,) and that constitution of the social economy, which should be formed on the plain ground of absolute truth generally, and specially on the ground of religious truth, perfectly clear of every deceptive fancy, would be better than the very best state of the ancient Highland character and social system. And yet there is something so singular, so poetical, and really in some points so truly elevated, in the ancient character and economy of these Celtic tribes, that she shows a kind of reluctance to lose

any particle that entered into the constitution of so strange and interesting a moral order. She cannot help looking back with a feeling, perhaps in some slight degree tinged with fondness and regret, on some of the more romantic and harmless of the superstitions that once had so visionary and solemn an influence. She has somewhat of a similar feeling, in this retrospect, to that with which a solitary devotee to contemplation has sometimes beheld the beautiful delusive aspects of things by moonlight fading into the plain sober forms of reality under the commencing ascendancy of day-light; or with which a person awaking from an enchanting dream, strives to recall the vanishing images, the last glimpse of which seems to convey something much finer than the objects arranged round the room, or to be seen through the window. And we must confess we were scarcely ever in an equal degree disposed to be forbearing to such a feeling. The departed or departing system of sentiments and habits certainly did contain a great deal that very powerfully tended to fix indelibly a fondly partial impression of almost *all* its parts on a youthful mind of sensibility and poetical enthusiasm, when presented to its view amidst that solemn mountain scenery, where that system had prevailed so many ages, had left so many religiously admitted traditions, and had continued, even down to that time, to maintain a very considerable, though declining, degree of actual prevalence among the people.

Setting aside historical correctness, we can well believe that our author is better qualified than any other person to delineate a lively picture of the former economy of Highland society. She complains, however, that it is now somewhat too late.

It certainly is to be regretted that there had not been, a century since, or even at a somewhat later period, just such an observer as our author, (saving, perhaps, that a somewhat smaller portion of enthusiasm would have sufficed for the object) introduced among the Highland tribes, and domesticated for several years among different clans, in order to enter into the very recesses of their character and social state, to learn their traditionary histories, to preserve the most striking of their written and unwritten poetry, to collect characteristic anecdotes, to discern the most material differences in the general character as appearing among the different sections

of the people, and then to come away with a comprehensive description of what certainly had no parallel among nations, and of what, being now in a great measure broken up and annihilated, will never return into existence. And that description ought to have been given with the same ease and animation as this before us,—the same power of presenting such moral portraits as will serve as well as if we conversed with the real living beings,—the same general and versatile force of colouring,—much of the same friendly sympathy with the people,—and as little as possible of the same neglect of method.

But our author shows it would, at any time, have been very difficult to acquire any intimate knowledge of the character of the Highlanders. Between them and the Lowlanders there uniformly existed such an active antipathy as to preclude all unreserved intercourse.

The distance of half the circumference of the globe could hardly have been more effectual than such a state of neighbourhood, to keep the best and the most romantic qualities of the mountaineers unknown. And any friendly and inquisitive stranger who should have wished to reside among them, would have met, according to Mrs. Grant's very natural representation, almost insuperable obstacles. As a transient visitor, he would have been received with politeness and hospitality; but if attempting to establish himself, he would have been regarded as an intruder; and especially any attempt to obtain the smallest particle of land, even if it could have been successful, would have excited so strong a hostility, as to leave no security either to his property or person. The land was not more in any of the districts than to afford moderate allotments to the members of the clan, all of whom regarded themselves as the family of the chief, and as having therefore such claims on him that his granting one acre to a stranger would have been a piece of outrageous injustice.

Nor was any satisfactory information to be obtained concerning the interior character of this race, from such individuals of them as sometimes came among the more southern people of the island. For either they came for education, too early in life to bring with them either the mature example or the knowledge of that character; or, if they came at a more advanced age, their quick and proud perception of the liability of their most peculiar feelings and superstitions to ridicule

among a less romantic generation, has put them on the most cautious reserve. Some of them have even endeavoured to extirpate from their minds the order of sentiments so incommensurable, because reputed so irrational, amidst such uncongenial society; but our author affirms that, once fixed, these sentiments became so deep and tenacious, that even though the force of the clearest religious truth were also brought in aid of the expulsion, and might seem to have effected it, they would recover almost all their power if a man happened to return to his native region.

“The moment he felt himself within the stony girdle of the Grampians, though he did not yield himself a prey to implicit belief, and its bewildering terrors and fantastic inspirations, still he resigned himself willingly to the sway of that potent charm, that mournful, yet pleasing illusion, which the combined influence of a powerful imagination and singularly warm affections have created and preserved in those romantic regions: That fourfold band, wrought by music, poetry, tenderness, and melancholy, which connects the past with the present, and the material with the immaterial world, by a mystic and invisible tie; which all born within its influence feel, yet none who are free from subjection to the potent spell can comprehend. This partial subjection to the early habits of resignation to the wildering powers of song and superstition, is a weakness to which no educated and polished Highlander will ever plead guilty. It is a secret sin, and, in general, he dies without confession; for this good reason, that he could not have the least hope of absolution.”—Vol. i. p. 36.

Ten essays make the substance of these volumes; and our first intention was to attempt a slight abstract of them in succession; but their excessively desultory and immethodical form has obliged us to decline this attempt. In a large work there really would have been no forgiving so irregular a mode of managing a subject. In the present instance the space is not so wide, but that the reader may traverse again any part of it where he imperfectly recollects the curious things that were scattered in such plenty and confusion. Taken all together, these essays form probably the most just and comprehensive, and beyond all question, the most animated description of Highland sentiments, manners, and customs, that has ever appeared. And the work abounds with what is of superior merit and ability to mere picturesque description;—with acute guesses at causes and happy illustrations of principles,—and also with pensive and elevated sentiments, sympathetic with those which formed the solemn and peculiar grace of the mystical and poetical people of whom the work is a worthy memorial.

A variety of sensible observations are made concerning the influences that operated, in a remote age and progressively downwards, to promote the growth of so peculiar, and in many points so dignified and attractive a character. Much is justly ascribed to the unmingled quality of the race, and consequent completeness of fraternity from identity of origin, with which they took possession of their mountains and glens, as a long asylum from the encroaching power of the southerners: to the still more concentrated recognition and spirit of kindred, the almost family economy and charities, into which the divisions respectively were compressed in their several valleys: to the spirit of independence which formed them all to heroism, through each successive generation, in defending their mountain territory: to their pride in a long unbroken line of honourable ancestry, to which they were most solicitous and ambitious to be honourably added, in the retrospect of their own distant posterity; and to the gloomy and sublime character of the region they inhabited. Music and heroic songs contributed at once to augment and to combine the influences of all these causes.

These particulars, as illustrated in a very spirited manner by the essayist, will go far towards accounting for the moral phenomena of the Highlands; but will still, we think, leave a considerable degree of mystery resting on the origin of some of the distinctions of the character in question. Much of a similar process has taken place with respect to other tribes of mankind without producing the same result. How, especially, is to be explained that refined and reflective pensiveness so prevalent among these tribes—if we are to admit the fidelity of our author's representation, and if there be any thing genuine, in point of moral spirit, in the poetry attributed to Ossian? It is easy enough to comprehend that habits of warlike passion, enterprise, and hazard,—that the frequent employment of chasing and killing the wild animals of the mountains,—that the gloomy impressions of a bold and gigantic but most dreary scenery,—and the combination with all these of the memory or traditions of brave ancestors, and of dark fancies about the haunting of their ghosts, might well have produced a certain fierce and austere solemnity, such as that which throws a frowning shade over the character of the heroes of Odin, as represented in what has come to us of the northern poetry, or such as that which has been found among some of the American aborigines. But really it is not yet

explained how this division of the Celtic barbarians acquired the tender melancholy, the pensive sublimity, the affectionate enthusiasm which, as far as yet appears, we must be constrained to attribute to them in such a degree as to no other uncultivated race.

The Essayist has made a strong and pleasing representation of the general good sense, thoughtfulness, and habits of shrewd and vigilant observation, of the Highlanders; and has shown that their local circumstances and their social condition very strongly called forth their thinking faculties. The comparatively little, though to them most important affairs of their valley and their clan, may indeed appear to furnish but a narrow scope for the exercise of those faculties, and of that conversational and deliberative oratory in which also they are here pronounced to have excelled: but our author has shown that this confined sphere did, notwithstanding, include a very considerable diversity of such occasions as demanded, each, a specific judgment and plan of action. She has represented, too, that while these tribes were secluded in complete ignorance of all the knowledge and literature of the world, it is wonderful how much truth of a moral and practical kind had been struck out among them by the co-operation and collision of their own minds, and fixed as a permanent common stock by the most faithful traditionary preservation.

Our author has enlarged also, with great animation, on the social virtues of these tribes,—the well governed temper and passions, the promptitude to friendly mutual services, (within the boundary of the clan,) the matrimonial fidelity, and that lofty sense of honour entertained by even the meanest members of the community. And she has shown how much these qualities were promoted by their high notions of a dignified ancestry, from whose revered character it would be infamous to degenerate, and by the consciousness of being, every individual of them, at all times within the cognizance, for honour or for shame, of the whole clan.

The superstitions of the Highlanders related chiefly to apparitions of the dead, and to fairies, of good, bad, and equivocal character. These simple elements spread, of course, into a very wide diversity of particular forms, which our author has represented a good deal at large in very lively colours, with a variety of curious illustrative anecdotes, many of which fell within her own knowledge.

In looking toward the probable origin of the belief in ap-

paritions of the dead, she insists, in opposition to the scornful disbelievers in all such phenomena, (which, however, she herself appears to consider as being uniformly fallacies of imagination) that the belief of such mysterious visitations could not have originated with minds of the weaker order; and she illustrates, in a very forcible and poetical manner, how such a belief was likely to originate, and probably did originate in very thoughtful minds of powerful imagination and deep sensibility. Perhaps, if the plain truth could be known, it would appear to be, that the persuasion did not originate in the mere constitution of minds of any class; but in certain real preternatural phenomena in the earliest ages, combining and conveying down their effect along with that belief in the existence after death, which tradition has dimly preserved in almost all barbarous nations. We will, however, transcribe a few of the sentences in which she conveys her conjectures.

“During the dim dawn of intelligence, no reason appeared why the spirit, still supposed to exist in a separate state, should not still cherish the pure affections and generous sentiments which made it lovely and beloved while imprisoned in mortality. To such enthusiastic beings as we have been contemplating, it could not appear unlikely that spirits so attached and so lamented, should assume some semblance of their wonted form and countenance; that they should come in the hour of deep sorrow and silent recollection, to soothe the solitary mourner, to assist his fond retrospections, and to cheer him with the hopes of a future meeting in some state no longer incident to change or separation. The state of mind thus pre-supposed, was quite sufficient to give familiar voices to the winds of night, and well-known forms to the mists of the morning. Thus it is likely that the first apparitions were the offspring of genius and sensibility, nursed by grief and solitude. These phantoms, however, which exalted the musings of the superior order of souls, and lent them wings to hover over the obscure abyss of futurity, were not long confined to their visionary solitudes. They soon became topics of vulgar discussion and popular belief; the fancied forms which were now supposed to people solitude, added horror to obscurity, and doubtless gave new terrors to guilt.”—Vol. i. p. 95.

A belief in the conscious existence of men after death being pre-supposed, this and similar passages would be as plausible, as they are a poetical explanation, of the manner in which the belief in apparitions might originate among a people of the character, and in the stage of early intellectual progress, which the Essayist describes. Indeed, with the pre-supposition, it is highly probable that in such a state of mind and

society the belief really *would* originate, and in this manner, if it had not existed already in a still more primitive period of the world. But such a belief could not have failed to become established in that more primitive age in consequence of the notorious occasional intervention and appearance of spiritual agents, which we have cause to be assured was no very infrequent expedient in the divine government, in the periods antecedent to the existence of a written revelation. If even but a very few instances of such preternatural intervention took place, in the parent nation of mankind, the possibility of spectral manifestations would be one of the most fixed notions among all the branches into which that nation extended and divided; a notion that probably could never be so far obliterated as that its existence among the Celtæ, or any other people, may rationally be attributed to the inventive conception of minds in a state of pensive enthusiasm. The general belief of a future state would powerfully contribute to preserve this notion uninterruptedly in existence. We repeat, however, that this high probability of the primeval origin of the notion in question, does not forbid us to admit, in such an enthusiastic state of mind as the author describes, a *competent* creative energy to originate the idea and the belief, in minds previously entertaining a persuasion of a conscious existence after death. Some of our author's expressions seem to imply, that even this latter belief also might have sprung up spontaneously amidst the solemn enthusiastic emotions of heathen and barbarous minds. But neither was this great truth originally left by the Creator to the chance of being or not being inventively apprehended by the human mind, nor can we admit that without revealed intimations it ever would have been so conceived as to become a prevailing belief among mankind.

The ancient occupiers of the Highlands having doubtless brought with them the belief of separate spirits both existing and appearing, it is easy to comprehend that in such a country, and such a state of the social feelings, the instances of this supposed appearance would become frequent, and would be with an aspect and circumstances of a deeply melancholy character. When the scene of their training to the belief and expectation of apparitions was a wild and solemn region,—with vast mountain solitudes, lofty or fantastic summits, deep darkened glens, torrents and cataracts, rocks, precipices,

caverns and echoes, mists, meteors, and storms; and when some of the occupations of some of the seasons involved considerable peril; and when, besides, each gloomy or dangerous locality by degrees acquired its tradition of being the scene of some mysterious occurrence; the effect could hardly fail to be, that their minds would be kept in that imaginative state, in which, while undefended by knowledge, they would be subject to endless illusions, and chiefly of a gloomy kind. And then, as our author so repeatedly represents, the state of the community and the social affections,—the cherished memory of a common and revered ancestry,—and that secluded, compressed, and reciprocally dependent condition of each tribe, which produced a more warm and faithful sentiment of fraternity even than that so often observed in uncultivated small nations, and which followed with enthusiastic and inextinguishable tenderness each departed relative and associate,—would powerfully contribute to retain, in Highland apprehension, the spirits of the departed friends as a shadowy but sometimes visible adjunct to the living community. And their conversations and their poetry would turn very often on this solemn subject, and on the supposed particular instances which had given almost every man, in his own apprehension, a kind of practical knowledge and interest in it. Nevertheless, it is asserted by some who have paid attention to such remains as have been preserved of the genuine poetry of the ancient Highlanders, that they contain nothing like that excessive frequency of ghosts, which has made their appearance quite a vulgar and unimpressive phenomenon in the poetic fabrication of Macpherson.

As examples of the mode and affecting circumstances of these supernatural interventions, the Essayist has introduced two striking poetical stories, one from the *Death of Gaul*, “a poem,” she says, “of *undoubted* antiquity.”* But after all that has been written, and all poetical relics that have been produced, it still appears impossible to form any distinct idea of the mode of subsistence, and the degree and kind of knowledge, power, or happiness, attributed by these Celtic tribes to separate spirits. No comprehensive and systematic

* This is rather indiscreet, as Mr. Laing has pronounced it to be of recent workmanship: we do not know whether his challenge to the editor to produce any good evidence that it was not written by himself, has been accepted or not.

economy of their condition seems to have been matured by their poets. The rude conception of their existence seems to keep them in being, rather that they may not be lost to the survivors, and that there may be society for those survivors to go to when they also shall depart, than to regard them as existing for their own sake, in an independent and a dignified economy. Nor could it seem that they were regarded as in possession of any very animated kind of happiness ; which is rather strange, when we consider the ardent affection with which departed friends were remembered, and the lively interest with which the survivors are represented as anticipating their own removal into the disembodied society. This deficiency of attraction in the *state* of the separate spirits strikes us so forcibly, that, though it will be allowed that such a people might feel much interest in the thought of rejoining their dead friends in *any* state not positively unhappy, yet we may very reasonably doubt whether the complacency in the view of death could be so much a thing of course as is implied in the following passage,—if the representation is to be understood of a time antecedent to the introduction of Christianity.

“This army of ghosts, that constantly hovered round those that mourned for them, and kept alive both their affection and their enthusiasm, had a two-fold effect upon the general character of the people. It was favourable to courage : as death, which did not put an end to existence, and reunited them to their departed friends, could have nothing very terrible in it ; and it strengthened attachment, because the deceased were not only ever present to the memory, but supposed to be often obvious to the senses. The beloved object, who not only dwelt in the soul of the mourner, but seemed ever hovering round, with fond impatience, to watch the moment of the union, became if possible, more endeared than ever.”
—Vol. i. p. 113.

It was, however, very necessary that these pensive and visionary mountaineers *should* be in some good measure habitually willing to quit the society of the living for that of the dead ; as, else, their living so close on the frontier of the world of spirits, and with so slight a barrier between, must have been felt a very oppressive privilege ;—for it should seem that the imagined appearances and voices of their departed friends most generally communicated warnings of approaching death. And it is to be observed, that these communications from departed spirits have, in the representation, a very mournful character, on the part of both the beings by

whom, and the persons to whom, they are made. The forms imagined to be seen are not only of shadowy and ominous aspect, but also have an expression of desolateness, languor, and melancholy: the voices, though soft and sweet, have a tone, and convey expressions, strongly allied to pensive sorrow: and emotions partaking, in full sympathy, of this mournful quality, are generally represented as excited in those to whom the solemn communication is made. In short, if the quality and effect of these supernatural visitings are at all correctly represented to us,—we do not say by the poems given us under the name of Ossian, so very large a portion of which may confidently be ascribed to Macpherson,—but by Mrs. Grant and two or three contemporary admirers and interpreters of the Celtic muse; it is impossible to avoid the conviction, that there was not a predominance of happy feeling in the sentiments which the ancient Highlanders entertained, concerning their relation with the world of spirits. In this respect their mythology, so to call it, while of so much more pathetic a cast than what we chiefly know of the Scandinavian, appears greatly inferior for animating excitement. The Hall of Odin, with its lively and heroic company, and its revels, presented much more palpable and inspiring forms of delight, of however rude a quality, than any thing we are told of among the feeble and pensive shades on the misty hills of the Highlands.

But it was not, as we have already mentioned, by departed and friendly spirits alone that the people of these tribes were continually haunted. There were fairies of sundry classes, defined or undefined: there were even malignant goblins, exceedingly watchful, and very considerably powerful, to do mischief. An ample portion of the work is employed in describing the kinds of injury they were most inclined or permitted to inflict, illustrated with a number of curious examples, selected from the ample stores that enrich the traditions of every glen and tribe. The longest and most curious story, that of a man who by regular appointment which he was most conscientious to keep, met and fought a number of times, an evil spirit, at midnight, in the most gloomy place in the whole country, is as good as any section we remember in the romances of mystery and terror. Our author must be sensible she has left it quite unexplained, and that some odd particulars of acknowledged fact in it really called for explanation.—She

recounts many of the ceremonies of precaution without which, even in modern times, after the prevalence of Christianity among them, (though, indeed, in an extremely imperfect form,) for so many ages, the Highlanders did not deem themselves or their friends secured against the power and spite of the supernatural agents of evil. We may transcribe as a specimen, the account of the ritual for defending an infant and its mother.

“The first danger to be guarded against was the power of fairies, in taking away the infant or its mother; who were never considered as entirely safe till the one was baptized, and the other had performed her devotions at some chapel or consecrated place. All the powers of darkness, and even those equivocal sprites, who did good or evil as they happened to be inclined, were supposed to yield instantly before the power of a religious rite, or even a solemn invocation of the Deity.

“But, then, the danger was, that one might be carried off in sleep. Sound orthodoxy would object to this,—that the same power guards us waking and asleep. This argument would not in the least stagger a Highland devotee. He would tell you, that till these sacred rites, which admit the child, and readmit the mother, into the church, were performed, both were in a state of impurity, which subjected them (the body, not the soul) to the power of evil spirits; and that it was the duty of the friends of such to watch them during their sleep, that, on the approach of evil spirits (who never came unseen) they might adjure them, in the holiest name, to depart: which they never failed to do when thus repelled. If these vigilant duties were neglected, the soul of the abstracted person might be saved, but his friends, in the privation they sustained, suffered the due punishment of their negligence of what was at once a duty of affection and religion. If, however, they were not able or willing to watch, or wished for a still greater security, the bed, containing the mother and the infant, was drawn out on the floor; the attendant took a Bible, and went thrice round it, waving all the time the open leaves, and adjuring all the enemies of mankind, by the power and virtue contained in that book, to fly instantly into the Red Sea, &c. After this ceremony had been gone through, all slept quiet and safely: yet it was not accounted a proof of diligent attachment to have recourse to this mode of securing a night's rest to the watcher.

“When the infant was secured by the performance of this hallowed rite from all risk of being carried away, or exchanged for a fairy, there was still an impending danger, which it required the utmost vigilance of mistaken piety to avert. This was not only the well-known dread of an *evil eye*, which, by a strange coincidence, is to be traced, not only in every country, in the first stage of civilization, but in every age of which any memorials are preserved: there was, besides this, an indistinct notion, that it was impious and too self-dependent to boast of the health or beauty of any creature, rational or irrational, that seemed to belong to us.” [The evil which would be incurred by boasting of the health or beauty of a child was] “no less than that of leaving the defenceless babe at the mercy of evil eyes and evil spirits, to be instantly deprived of the vigour, or the

bloom and symmetry so admired. An infant, in short, was not to be praised at all, without a previous invocation of the Deity."—Vol. i. p. 165.

Our essayist represents, that a large portion of the superstitions entertained by these tribes when pagans, became incorporated with Christianity on its introduction, and under this union and sanction continued to prevail to a very late period, indeed to the present day in some of the most retired parts of the Highlands. She observes, that their solemn notions and habitual impressions concerning separate spirits, were adapted to facilitate the admission of some grand doctrines of Christianity, coalescing with them rather than being supplanted by them; so that, in fact, the faith of the early Christians in the Highlands respecting a future state, consisted substantially of pagan elements, methodized, exalted, and enlarged, by that very limited share which their teachers could impart to them of the light of revelation.—When popery at length made its way, though imperfectly, among them, it introduced into their Christianity more, if not worse, superstitions than Christianity had expelled from their primitive paganism.

A somewhat disproportionate degree of anxiety and labour appears to have been felt and exercised on a topic to which our author returns again and again, namely, the great moral benefits derived by these tribes, both in their heathen condition, and amidst the very feeble and slowly progressive light of revealed truth through subsequent ages, from their superstitious notions respecting spirits. She represents in how many ways it may be hoped these delusions were salutary,—how they raised barbarians above the grossness incident to their condition,—how they afterwards did substantially some things which pure Christianity was not yet grown strong enough among them to do,—and how they supplied the deficiencies of an extremely imperfect and unauthoritative legislation. We do not see that the reasonings on this point amount to much more than this very plain and undeniable proposition,—that as far as the superstition concerning ghosts gave additional power to conscience, in enforcing such just moral principles as the people had the knowledge of, so far, and relatively to the matter of fact merely, it was useful. It was clearly thus practically useful when, to take one of our author's illustrations, a man was deterred from committing a

murder by the fear of the haunting and vengeance of the ghost, or from being a dishonest or cruel guardian to the children of persons deceased, by the apprehension of an affrighting visit from the spirits of the parents. Just in the matter of fact the operation of the superstition was obviously good: but was it good—must it not have been in many ways pernicious—for the mind to be under the persuasion that the ghosts of men were the governors of the world, and the sovereign dispensers of retribution? But more than this; our author herself is candid enough to observe, that some of the operations of the superstition, in at least the pagan period, were extremely pernicious in the simple matter of fact.

It is also evident from our author's statements, that, besides imposing the fetters and incumbrance of many frivolous and irrational ceremonies, the superstition of the Highlanders has in spite of the beneficent light of Christianity, given a deformed and gloomy aspect to the providential government of the world, as beheld by them. Of this there needs no other proof than the fact, as stated by her, that they had, in rather recent times, such a fearful unremitting impression of the vigilant haunting of evil spirits, that it was presumption for a person to go out alone in the night.

On the whole, while admiring, perhaps nearly as much as our animated author, the many fine romantic features in this most singular economy, we sincerely rejoice that a system of notions and habits which involved so much unhappy superstition, with such a peculiar power (from the constitution and local situation of the community) of permanently retaining it, is breaking up and passing away. On the cause of this great change, a cause little enough to be sure, directly related to Christianity or intellectual philosophy, our author has many very sensible and interesting observations toward the conclusion of these essays. We need not say the cause is, the adoption, by the great Highland proprietors, of a new, and to themselves more profitable, use of the land. The system which supported and kept together each clan, as a little tribe united by the affections and interests, and indeed by the actual relationships of a large family—that of numerous small allotments of land, partly cultivated for grain—has been generally relinquished, by what would formerly have been called the chieftains of clans. Much of their ancient feudal consequence and authority, and some portion perhaps of the affectionate

and romantic devotedness of their dependent clans, had been already lost, through the effectual interference of government to open and subjugate the Highlands, after the events of 1745. And by degrees the chiefs have come almost unanimously into the plan of living in style in the great cities, like other people of consequence, and drawing the greatest possible revenue from their mountain tracts ; and this greatest revenue is found to be realized by giving up the whole to pasturage, especially of sheep. Consequently, a large portion of the inhabitants have been compelled to emigrate, to seek subsistence in the Lowlands or in America. The latter is naturally chosen by all who can afford the expense of the passage ; and great numbers have already become diligent cultivators in the United States, or within the limits of the English Canadian territory. There, however, our author asserts, they will not preserve their high enthusiastic and romantic sentiments ; but there, then, we presume they will, fortunately, forget by degrees their superstitions. Benevolence would wish that they might there also speedily let their language fall into disuse ; for how are they ever to obtain their desirable share of knowledge, while strangers to all the languages in which knowledge has been accumulated and circulated in the civilized world ?

XVIII.

ECCLESIASTICAL BIOGRAPHY.

Ecclesiastical Biography ; or Lives of eminent Men, connected with the History of Religion in England ; from the Commencement of the Reformation to the Revolution ; selected, and illustrated with Notes. By CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, M. A., Dean and Rector of Bocking, and Domestic Chaplain to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.

LITTLE more will be needful, for the purpose of explaining the nature and adjudging the value of this work, than to specify the materials of which it is compiled. The articles concerning Wickliffe, Thorpe, Bilney, Tindall, Lord Cromwell, Rogers, Hooper, Rowland, Taylor, Latimer, and Cranmer, are compiled from Fox's Acts and Monuments. That concerning Lord Cobham is partly from Fox, and partly from Bale's Brief Chronicle. The account of Ridley is partly from Fox, and partly from a life of the bishop, by Dr. Gloucester Ridley, published in 1763. The highly entertaining life of Woolsey, by the Cardinal's Gentleman Usher, Cavendish, is here for the first time faithfully printed from a manuscript in the Lambeth Library, collated with another manuscript in that library, and a manuscript of the same life in the library of the Dean and Chapter of York Cathedral. This performance, indeed, appeared in print long since, and was reprinted in the Harleian Miscellany, but so altered and spoiled in almost every sentence, by some foolish editor, as to bear but little resemblance to the genuine exemplar. The long life of Sir Thomas More is now first published from a manuscript in the Lambeth Library, written towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth, by a zealous papist. Walton's lives of Hooker, Donne, Herbert, Sir Henry Wotton, and Bishop Sanderson, are reprinted entire, with additions by Strype to the life of

Hooker. There are reprinted entire a life of Jewel, prefixed to an English edition, in 1685, of his *Apology of the Church of England*; the translation, published in 1629, of Bishop Carleton's life, in Latin, of Bernard Gilpin; Sir George Paule's life of Archbishop Whitgift; Bishop Fell's life of Dr. Hammond; Burnet's life of Sir Matthew Hale; Matthew Henry's life of his father, Philip Henry; and Burnet's "*Passages of the Life and Death of the Earl of Rochester.*" The "*Memoirs of Nicholas Ferrar,*" by Dr. Peckard, published in 1790, are here reprinted, "but not without some omissions." The account of this most extraordinary man and his extraordinary nephew, is in this republication extended by the accession of some curious papers relating to them, found in Lambeth Library, though supposed by Dr. Peckard to have been lost. The life of Bishop Hall is "composed principally from a republication of two of his tracts," "*Observations of some specialties of Divine Providence,*" and "*Hard Measure.*" The account of Baxter is composed of extracts from his "*Life and Times.*" The life of Tillotson is abridged from a memoir of him "by F. H——, M. A.," published in 1717, which Mr. Wordsworth professes to hold in no very high esteem.

The work is inscribed, in profoundly reverential terms, to the Primate; and will not, we hope, have offended the modesty inseparable from the highest ecclesiastical dignity, by betraying to the public that his Grace's "unceasing cares and labours" are directed to the "promotion of pure taste, good morals, and true religion." It is affirmed, that his Grace's many acts of munificence for the increase of the literary treasures of his country, exalt his name to the same level with those of the most illustrious of his predecessors, Cranmer, and Parker, and Laud." It may be doubted whether Archbishop Tillotson would have felt the attributed resemblance in this subordinate species of episcopal merit sufficiently flattering to atone for the associating of his name in any way with those of the "illustrious" Parker and Laud: and we presume our editor cannot have studied, so accurately as he ought, his patron's taste in ecclesiastical character and in language.

A sensible preface explains the compiler's motives to the undertaking. Every one will accord to his opinion, as to the necessary and happy influence of the college and the archiepiscopal palace in kindling pure Christian zeal. He observes, "a protracted residence in either of our universities,

and afterwards in that service which I have mentioned, it will easily be understood, was likely to engage any man in ardent wishes and desires for the general prosperity and welfare of sincere piety and true religion," and to inspire him more particularly with an earnest concern "that these most important interests should ever advance and flourish among our theological students and the clergy; and, through their means and labours, with the divine blessing, in every rank of society." It was but in obedience, therefore, to the cogently evangelical influence which is always operating within the walls of a university, and in emulation of the active piety which he observed in every person who had resided there a considerable time, that Mr. Wordsworth projected, during a long-continued residence at Cambridge, a work of the nature of that now before us. The official situation which has since given him access to the Lambeth Library, must obviously have afforded him many facilities for the execution of the design; and he has availed himself of them with a very laudable industry.

The editor assigns good reasons why the series should not commence earlier than the "preparations towards a Reformation by the labours of Wickliffe and his followers," nor be brought down lower than the Revolution.

The space so limited, formed in our island the grand military age of Christianity, during which the substance and the forms of that religion were put in a contest which exhausted the possibilities of human nature. The utmost that could be attained or executed by man, in point of piety, sanctity, courage, atrocity, and intellectual energy, was displayed during this warfare. The compiler justly thought that nothing could be more interesting than a fair exhibition, presented in the persons of the leading combatants, of the principles and the most signal facts of that great contest. And this is very effectually done, as to that part of it which lay between the church of Rome and the protestants; but not so satisfactorily as to that part of it which was maintained between the English establishment and the puritans.

The editor's preference of original authorities, and his forbearance to alter their expressions or even their orthography, will obtain the marked approbation, we should think, of every sensible reader. He says,

"It will be found, (for which, I imagine, no apology is necessary,) that I have preferred the ancient and original authorities, where they could be procured, before modern compilations and abridgments; the narratives, for instance, of Fox and Carleton, before the more artificial compositions of Gilpin.—Neither do I think it will require any excuse with the judicious reader, that in the early parts of the series, I have been at some pains to retain the ancient orthography. It was one advantage which I contemplated in projecting this compilation, that it would afford, by the way, some view of the progress of the English language, and of English composition. This benefit would have been greatly impaired by taking away the old spelling. But I have always thought that the far more solemn interests of reality and truth are also, in a degree, violated by that practice.

"The reader is desired further to observe, that in many cases, the lives are republished from the originals, entire, and without alteration; but in others the method pursued has been different. Wherever the work before me seemed to possess a distinct character as such, either for the beauty of its composition, the conveniency of its size, its scarcity, or any other sufficient cause, I was desirous that my reader should have the satisfaction of possessing it complete: but where these reasons did not exist, I have not scrupled occasionally to proceed otherwise: only, in regard to alterations, it is to be understood, that all which I have taken the liberty of making are confined solely to *omissions*. Thus, the lives written by Isaak Walton are given entire, and I have inserted all that he published: but the accounts of Ferrar and Tillotson have been shortened.

"Many of the lives which are given from Fox's *Acts and Monuments*, and which the editor looks upon as among the most valuable parts of his volumes, are brought together and compiled from distant and disjointed parts of that very extensive work; a circumstance of which it is necessary that any one should be informed, who may wish to compare these narratives with the originals. It will be found also that in many places much has been omitted; and that a liberty has not unfrequently been taken of leaving out clauses of particular sentences, and single coarse and gross terms and expressions, especially such as occurred against papists. But, though he has not all Fox laid before him, yet the reader may be assured that all which he has is Fox."

"In the notes which I have added, my aim has been occasionally to correct my author; but much more frequently to enforce his positions and illustrate him, and that especially in matters relating to doctrines, opinions, manners, language, and characters. Their number might easily have been increased, but I was unwilling to distract the reader's eye from the object before him, except where I thought some salutary purpose might be answered."—Preface, p. xiv.

After expressing his desire to promote by this work the interests of Christianity in general, he acknowledges it would not be a mistake, if any one should surmise that he wishes to promote it especially as "professed within the pale of the Church of England," being persuaded that its advancement under that specific modification will conduce most to the prosperity of the universal church. He adds,

“And yet, if he could any where have found popery associated with greater piety and heavenly-mindedness than in Sir Thomas More, or non-conformity united with more Christian graces than in Philip Henry, those examples also should have obtained their station in this work.” “It has then been no part of my design to give occasion of offence to any.—If indeed occasion be taken where none was intended to be given; if the errors and the evil practices of popery, the truths of protestantism, the sufferings of martyrs and confessors, and the intolerance and cruelty of persecutors; if the madness of fanatics, and the evils of civil and religious war, cannot be described and deplored without blame; if the wisdom to be derived to present and future ages from the records of the past, cannot be obtained by ourselves, without exciting displeasure in other bosoms; there may be circumstances which shall call forth our concern and sorrow for the pain of a suffering fellow-creature; but the consequences must be endured, as no part of our design, but only accidental to it; and the complainant may bear to be admonished, whether, instead of casting harsh imputations upon us, he would not be better employed in re-examining the grounds and principles of his own faith, and inquiring whether cause has not been afforded to him of rendering thanks and praise to the mercy of God, for giving him yet another call and summons to escape from error and forsake his sin.”—Preface, p. xviii.

There is something which we do not perfectly understand in this last paragraph. Why does Mr. Wordsworth expect to “excite displeasure” and incur “harsh imputations?” In what character does he view himself, as connected with this publication? If Messrs. Rivingtons, the publishers of the work, had chosen, without the intervention of any ostensible editor, to have a new edition printed of Ridley’s *Life of Ridley*, Walton’s *Lives*, Sir G. Paule’s *Life of Whitgift*, &c. &c. they would never have dreamed of provoking displeasure, and having to endure harsh imputations; and why should Mr. Wordsworth? Surely he is not making himself the responsible voucher for the truth and discretion of everything in these six volumes, and pledging himself to the vindication of whatever in them may be of a nature to offend the popish and protestant non-conformists to the church of England. With respect, at least, to that large proportion of the work which is given as an accurate reprint of entire memoirs, it was quite needless for him to take on himself any responsibility, beyond the very small degree involved in choosing those particular memoirs in preference to memoirs of some of the same persons written by other authors. A somewhat different rule of accountableness, indeed, may be applied to those parts which consist of comparatively short extracts from large works, as in the articles compiled from Fox’s book, and that concerning

Baxter, composed of passages from his own history of his life and times ; and also to those articles which are slightly abridged from the original memoirs merely by some omissions, as in the Lives of Ferrar and Tillotson. In compiling articles in this manner, a certain, though not very definable measure of responsibility does attach to the editor ; since, though he should engage that every sentence is in the precise words of the original authorities, he may have followed such a rule of selection and omission as will produce an unfair representation of the subjects or characters. With respect to this portion of the compilation, therefore, it would not have been amiss for Mr. Wordsworth to have briefly stated what may have been his leading rule of selection, especially in the article drawn from Baxter's history. In the construction of this article, indeed, the reader instantly perceives one rule to have been, to omit all record of Baxter's memorable campaigns against ecclesiastical intolerance. This rule of compilation might have been ingenuously avowed by Mr. Wordsworth ; and it would have been taken in good part by the candid and considerate reader, who would have been very far from exacting of the archbishop of Canterbury's chaplain, an endeavour to give additional notoriety to the controversies and sufferings of the champion of the non-conformists. Only it would have been justly insisted, that, while adopting such a rule of omission, he should forbear all claims to have his work received as containing the substance of the history of religion in England during the seventeenth century ; this being no admissible pretension for a work, which exhibits at great length the public proceedings, the ecclesiastical maxims, and the most laboured eulogiums, of the distinguished high-churchmen, and reduces down to a diminutive sketch of personal character the ample story of the Hercules of non-conformity. Let this ill judged pretension have been forborne, and a man in Mr. Wordsworth's double ecclesiastical capacity would have excited no very great "displeasure," or "harsh imputations," by omitting, in a memoir of Baxter, all Baxter's relations of the persecutions he suffered, of the silencing of two thousand conscientious ministers, and of the conference at the Savoy. Thus guarding against any heavy censure on his partial principle of selection in compiling the memoirs which were to be composed of a small extracted portion of large works, he might have exonerated himself in ten words from all responsibility on account

of the lives reprinted entire and unaltered. He had only to say, that in their time they had obtained, in a greater or less degree, the public sanction, as the best or the most agreeably written memoirs of the persons they celebrate ; and that they are put to stand on the ground of their own merits, just as much on this republication, as on their first appearance.

Readers, the most irritably fraught with sectarian captiousness, could easily be made to comprehend, that if several biographers of note in the seventeenth century assumed some principles which these readers believe to be false, or at least very questionable, and threw a partial colouring over the characters and transactions they described, it is no fault of Mr. Wordsworth ; and that in rendering to the public what will be on all hands acknowledged an acceptable service, by republishing these noted, curious, and now scarce performances, he would have greatly injured the credit of the new edition, if he had destroyed the integrity of the works by omitting or modifying a single paragraph for the purpose of correcting injustice or avoiding offence. So far, therefore, as the passage we have extracted can be construed to refer to the contest between the ecclesiastical establishment and the puritans and sectaries, we are quite at a loss for the meaning and object of that sort of solemn preparation of Christian fortitude, that air of resignation to the imperious dictates of conscience at all costs and hazards, which seem so oddly acting or mocking the character of a confessor. This would be intelligible, on the supposition of Mr. Wordsworth's considering a person who furnishes notes to a new edition of a work, as necessarily personating the author, and avowing and warranting every thing advanced in the work, unless corrected in his notes. But it is impossible our editor can choose to make himself responsible, for instance, for the whole strain of representation in the lives by Walton ; a pleasing writer, certainly, but no more a historian, in the most respectable sense, than he was a mineralogist. From the moment he has pronounced the name of his subject, it seems absolutely put out of his power to recollect that his favourite was of the posterity of Adam, till it comes to be acknowledged, towards the last page, that the personage could not be exempted from Adam's penalty of decay and death. His ecclesiastics, especially, keep the reader in continual astonishment how wisdom and virtue of such ethereal quality could be so long retained

from evaporating to the sky. To this earth they were hardly indebted, even to the amount of finding it a place to improve themselves in—except in knowledge; for their moral endowments were complete from the first. Every thing that opposed them in any point was error and malice; and the author wonders how even error and malice themselves could have had such effrontery. And when these superhuman characters carried themselves with meekness and moderation, which indeed they did always, in the contests which arose from a criminal doubt of their infallibility, their doing so is celebrated as if they had possessed a power and a right to avenge themselves by bringing down fire from heaven. All institutions to which they adhered were necessarily of divine appointment, and authorized to impose themselves on all judgments and consciences, and to award punishments to recusants, for which it was no small perversity in them not to be thankful. Mr. Wordsworth cannot mean to have himself considered as saying all that is said by such a biographer. Still less as adopting all the dictates of ignorant bigotry in Sir George Paule's *Life of Archbishop Whitgift*, which intolerant prelate is there described as every thing reasonable, moderate, forbearing, forgiving, and "tender-hearted," and all whose opponents and victims deserved to fall into incomparably worse hands.

With respect to this one article, indeed, we may perhaps be allowed to question whether it was perfectly consistent with liberality of spirit, even in the irresponsible office of republisher, or the very slightly responsible office of compiler, to admit such a thing into the series, and so make it an inseparable part of the purchase. It has no such excellence of workmanship as to render it, in spite of its moral qualities, worth possessing as a literary rarity; and as to those moral qualities, the editor knows that if all biography were written in the same manner, the best use of all biography would be to light fires. Every impartial examiner of the history of those times knows, that nothing less than either the most stupid bigotry, or flagrant dishonesty, could uniformly, throughout a long memoir, represent the proceedings on which Whitgift's fame is founded, as directed solely against faction, turbulence, and irreligion. Every one who has but glanced at that history knows, that he was the staunch and most willing minister and prompter of the bigotry of the half-popish Elizabeth; that his proceedings were such, as to draw from the

lord treasurer, Burleigh, (who is, notwithstanding, in this memoir, impudently affirmed to have been "always his firm and constant friend,") an indignant remonstrance, pronouncing one of his most celebrated measures more iniquitous than those of the Spanish inquisition; that he and his coadjutor, the bishop of London, received, and received without adopting any change of conduct in consequence, a letter from the lords of the council,* in which it was represented to these prelates, that the council had "of late heard of great numbers of zealous and learned preachers suspended from their cures in the county of Essex, and that there is no preaching, prayers, or sacraments, in most of the vacant places; that in some few of them persons neither of learning nor good name are appointed; and that in other places of the country, great numbers of the persons that occupy cures, are notoriously unfit; most for the lack of learning; some chargeable with great and enormous faults, as drunkenness, filthiness of life, gaming at cards, haunting of ale-houses, &c., against whom they heard of no proceedings, but that they were quietly suffered." The letter was accompanied with a catalogue of names, one column of learned ministers deprived, a second of unlearned and vicious ones continued, and a third of pluralists and non-residents; on which the council observed, "against these latter we have heard of no inquisition; but of great diligence and extreme usage against those that were known to be diligent preachers; we therefore pray your lordships to have some charitable consideration of their causes, that people may not be deprived of their diligent, learned, and zealous pastors, for a few points ceremonial which entangled their consciences." It was owing to the relentless intolerance of the queen, who supported the prelates in all such proceedings, that such ministers as Burleigh and Walsingham were reduced to remonstrate in vain. Now if a bigoted retainer of the name of Sir George Paule, chose to write a life of such a prelate, celebrating his transcendent piety, equity, clemency, usefulness, and so forth, and applying all the terms of odium and contempt to whatever was opposed to him, we cannot comprehend what necessity on earth there could be for Mr. Wordsworth to give new currency to this piece of arrogance and misrepresenta-

* Burleigh, Warwick, Shrewsbury, Leicester, Lord Charles Howard, Sir James Crofts, Sir Christopher Hatton, and Sir Francis Walsingham.

tion. We will not entertain the suggestion, that such a necessity could arise from his official situation; such a surmise is too humiliating to be admitted for a moment. Whatever could have been the reason that determined its insertion, we should have thought, that, as Mr. Wordsworth has undertaken to correct, confirm, or illustrate all his authors by means of notes, the determination to introduce this article would have been accompanied by the strongest conviction of the duty of protesting against the violent bigotry of the writer, and cautioning the readers against forming, on so bad an authority, their estimate of the archbishop, and of the class of persons that he persecuted. We observe nothing of this kind, however, in the notes. The editor seems willing the piece should produce all the effect it can on the minds of his clerical brethren, for whose use his work is especially intended. And we are ashamed to see him willing that other pieces of misrepresentation, also, should produce their effect; for in one of the notes on this article, he recommends the lately reprinted account of the famous Hampton-Court conference drawn up by Dr. Barlow, which he says "is important, as exhibiting a view of the state of the controversy between the orthodox clergy and the puritans, and the perusal of which, in this place, is therefore recommended to the reader." "It has appeared again, recently, in a valuable and seasonable Collection of Tracts, called the Churchman's Remembrancer." Now Mr. Wordsworth knows that the puritan divines who attended that conference, and had quite as much right to be believed as Dr. Barlow, declared that account to be an utterly unfair report; and that their historians relate many instances of the insolence and violence of the prelates and the monarch, in that "meeting for the hearing and determining things pretended to be amiss in the church." (See Neal's Hist., vol. I., p. 410.) It is therefore not obvious, in what sense the reappearance of such a partial, and consequently, in effect, fallacious tract, can be called "seasonable." The only mode in which the republication of such things as that tract, and this Life of Whitgift, could be rendered seasonable in the sense of being useful, would be, to accompany them with a severe comment to mark the various ways in which prejudice and bigotry can misrepresent without committing themselves in palpable and bulky falsehoods, and to illustrate some of the pernicious effects which have been the result of such partial alienation of understanding, or total contempt of principle, in

the statements of party historians, on whatever side. Such a comment on the *Life of Whitgift* might very properly be extended from the spirit and trustworthiness of the biographer, to the merits of the subject; and it would never be otherwise than "seasonable" for a clergyman to evince the present liberality of his order, by disclaiming, in its name and his own, all principles allied to those by which the prelate in question was actuated. For, without going further than the facts alleged by Burleigh, Walsingham, and the rest of that memorable council, it may fairly be asserted, that Whitgift acted on the principle, that religion and morality, the appointments of the Almighty, are things exceedingly subordinate to the ecclesiastical establishment, a local appointment of man. It appears from this testimony, which no man will have the folly to call in question, that the archbishop could easily tolerate his clergy in being ignorant, careless, and profligate, provided they punctiliously observed all the prescribed ceremonies; while he could applaud himself for directing the vengeance of the Star Chamber against the most learned, pious, and zealous preachers, that conscientiously declined some part of the ceremonial conformity. He chose rather that the people should not be instructed in religion at all, than be taught it by even the most excellent ministers, who could not acknowledge a particular gesture, or robe, or form of words, as an essential part of it. The censure of such a character, and the execration of such principles, are no matter of party; for it is not permitted to any party, pretending at all to religion, to approve them. But the condemnation comes with a peculiarly good grace from the clergy; and it might be expected they would lose no fair opportunity to express it. It is difficult to comprehend why a liberal clergyman should have introduced into his compilation such an article as this life, but for the sake of giving himself such an opportunity, unless he acted under some superior authority, which prescribed to him the exact length and breadth of his task. In order, therefore, to preserve civility to the present editor, we must suppose him to be subjected to some much more illiberal supervision, than we believe it is usual for the trade to appoint over authors and editors. And as to the compilation itself, we consider it as much disgraced by the admission of this article.—As a slight sample of Sir George Paule and his most reverend patron, we may cite an illustration of their apostolic notions of the best means of giving dignity and effect to the Christian religion.

“Every third year he went into Kent, (unless great occasions hindered him,) where he was so honourably attended upon by his own train (consisting of two hundred persons) and with the gentlemen of the country, that he did sometimes ride into the city of Canterbury, and into other towns, with eight hundred or a thousand horse. And surely the entertainment which he gave them, and they him, was so great, that, as I am verily persuaded, no shire in England did, or could, give greater, or with more cheerful minds, unto each other. The fatherly care which he had of his clergy, (whom he never charged with visitation, but once in twenty years,) his affability amongst the gentlemen, and courteous usage of his tenants, gained him so great a love, that he might very far prevail with them ; yea, they never denied him any request that he made unto them.

“At his first journey into Kent, he rode into Dover, being attended with a hundred of his own servants, at least, in livery, whereof there were forty gentlemen in chains of gold. The train of clergy and gentlemen in the country and their followers, was about five hundred horse. At his entrance into the town, there happily landed an intelligencer from Rome, of good parts, and account, who wondered to see an archbishop or clergyman, in England, so revered and attended. But seeing him next upon the sabbath-day in the cathedral church of Canterbury, attended upon by his gentlemen and servants (as is aforesaid), also by the dean, prebendaries, and preachers, in their surplices, and scarlet hoods, and heard the solemn music, with the voices, and organs, and cornets, and sackbuts, he was overtaken with admiration, and told an English gentleman of very good quality (who then accompanied him) ‘that they were led in great blindness at Rome by our own nation, who made the people there believe that there was not in England either archbishop, or bishop, or cathedral, or any church, or ecclesiastical government ; but that all was pulled down to the ground, and that the people heard their ministers in the woods and fields, among trees, and brute beasts ; but, for his own part, he protested, that, (unless it were in the pope’s chapel,) he never saw a more solemn sight, or heard a more heavenly sound.’ ‘Well,’ said the English gentleman, ‘I am glad of this your so lucky and first sight ; ere long you will be of another mind, and, I hope, work miracles and return to Rome, in making those that are led in blindness, to see and understand the truth.’”—Vol. IV. p. 387.

Now, considering in what manner the prelate valued himself and the institution of which he held the first dignity, on all this personal and ecclesiastical pomp, we would hope, for the sake of his complacency, that he might not have happened to have read Cavendish’s most entertaining *Life of Wolsey*, then existing in manuscript at Lambeth, and now for the first time correctly printed in this work ; for, in reading that record, he would have been almost strangled with envy at the description of a far superior magnificence displayed, a little more than half a century before him, by a dignitary of the church of Rome.

Having discharged the indispensable duty, in place of the

editor, (who has not felt the jurisdiction of his office extending so far,) of reprobating the part of the compilation which is so flagrant with the brimstone of intolerance and persecution, it is with great pleasure we find ourselves at liberty to say, that on the whole the work is a very valuable service rendered both to the religious and the literary public. The parts compiled from Fox are judiciously extracted and disposed; and as that huge work is for the most part reposing in undisturbed dust, and will never be consulted by so much as one in a thousand of our reading countrymen, we are glad that a considerable number of them will now be enabled to peruse, in Fox's own language, some of the most striking pieces of history contained within the whole records of the world. They may contemplate, in a narrative full of antique simplicity and animation, the actions and speeches of such men as Wickliffe, Latimer, Ridley, and a number more of the same order; characters of a strange and gigantic race that seems now extinct, and which holds, in the history of religion, a rank exactly parallel to that held by Plutarch's heroes in the history of war. Cavendish's very curious memoir, in its true original form, will be highly acceptable to the public. We are not less pleased with the original life of Sir Thomas More, and are sincerely grateful to Mr. W. for his laborious care to give it in a correct and complete state. It is now more ample and more animated, than any of the memoirs of him with which the public are familiar. The lives here given of Jewel, Gilpin, Hammond, Sir Matthew Hale, &c., are some of them but very little, and some of them not at all, within the acquaintance of the generality of readers; and we have many times observed with wonder, how few persons comparatively know any thing of the memorable character and history of Nicholas Ferrar, notwithstanding the memoirs, which are here in substance reprinted, were published so lately as the year 1790.—It cannot be read without a very unusual mixture of admiring and indignant feeling: we can remember no other instance of being so much provoked with so pre-eminently excellent a man. He was in the fullest sense of the word a prodigy of early talents, acquirements, and piety; travelled almost before he had attained the age of manhood, over the greater part of Europe, commanding involuntarily the admiration and affection of the most learned men in the most learned universities and academies, passing through many ad-

ventures and perils with a heroism of too elevated a kind to be called romantic, the heroism of piety, and maintaining every where an immaculate character ; on returning home, (in the earlier part of the seventeenth century,) he was almost compelled into important public employments, made a brilliant entrance in the House of Commons, waging ardent and successful war on the public delinquents that in those times, so unlike the present, infested that house ; and after he had done this, and when there was plenty more such work for him to do, he quitted public life, at little more than the age of thirty, in obedience to a religious fancy he had long entertained, and formed of his family and relations a sort of little half-popish convent, in which he passed the remainder of his life.

XIX.

S P A I N .

Chronicle of the Cid. From the Spanish. By ROBERT SOUTHEY.

DURING the seven centuries that have elapsed since the death of the Cid, there has probably never been a time, till within the last seven months, when a large volume of half legendary history of his adventures would have had any great chance of obtaining much attention in England. Just now is the time, or rather four or five months since was the time, for calling some of the chiefs of the ancient Spanish chivalry from their long slumber, in order to assist us to extend backward into former ages our interest in the heroic character of that nation ; a nation in which we had begun to hope that almost every nobleman and every peasant was going to perform such exploits as those of the Cid, in a more righteous cause than almost any in which that hero had the fortune to display his valour. We are never content to confine our admiration to the present spirit and actions of an individual, or of a people, that has become a favourite with us, if we can find or fancy any thing deserving to be admired, in the retrospect of its earlier times. Besides, when a people is entering on a grand and most perilous enterprise, in which it is evident that any thing less than the most heroic spirit must fail, the martial names and achievements of its ancestors have a certain influence, a greater, indeed, than is warranted by the history of national character, on our hopes of its success. When summoned to vindicate the national cause, the men surely will not hide themselves from danger among the very monuments of their heroic progenitors ; they *cannot* be content to read and recite the stories of invincible champions, of their own names, and, by their nativity, reflecting lustre on their own villages and towns, and yet see these towns and villages commanded and plundered by bands of for-

eign invaders ; they *cannot* endure to see their country and themselves in a state to make them abhor the recollection that such renowned heroes were their forefathers ;—is it possible that the Spaniards of the present day, recalling to mind the gallant hostility which once expelled the Moors, can quietly sink down under the domination of the modern Saracens ? It has occurred to our thoughts numberless times, while going through this volume, what an intolerable place their country would soon become, to the usurping enemy, if the martial spirit which blazed all over it in the eleventh century could be now re-kindled ; and what a dreadful impression would be made on the Gallic squadrons by even a very small army of such men as this Rodrigo Diaz, and those that fought by his side. The very same reflections have occurred, no doubt, to multitudes of the Spanish nation, within the last few months : but, notwithstanding all such reflections, and the momentary ardour they may in some instances possibly have excited, it would appear that one more proof remained to be given, that, in these times, the tombs, the histories, and the splendid fables of valiant ancestors have lost all their power against a daring invader.

As all our readers, as well as ourselves, talk less or more every day of the events in Spain, which have lately awakened the strongest interest throughout the whole civilized world, it will, perhaps, be permitted us to take this occasion of suggesting a few considerations relative to those events, and to the manner in which they have been viewed and celebrated in this country.

With regard to the manner in which those events have been beheld and discussed, it is painful to us, as believers in Christianity, to have to observe, that it may be doubted whether there has ever been a grand affair, involving a most momentous crisis, and creating a profound and universal solicitude, which was contemplated in this country with any thing so much like a general consent to forget all religious considerations. The anxiety which we have fully shared with all around us, for the success of the Spanish people, could not prevent us from sometimes thoughtfully observing in what terms anxiety, speculation, or triumph, were expressed by veteran statesmen, young political philosophers, many divines, the whole tribe almost of journalists, and a very large proportion of the mass of the people ; and it has been exceedingly striking to perceive the general willingness to exempt the Governor of the world

from all exercise of care or interference. We really believe we have hardly met with one political or military calculation on the powers and probabilities in this great commotion, in which the fact of an Almighty Providence, if any accident could have suggested it to the calculator's thoughts, would have been of half as much importance in his account, as one regiment of soldiers more or less, or one cargo of ammunition. But in general, the thought seems not to have occurred at all ; the plans, the reasonings, the auguries, the exultation, and the fears, have all been entertained and revolved, under an entire failure to recollect that an invisible Being has ever decided the course and events of human affairs. And the benefit of this exclusion of every thought relating to that Being has been very great, to the confident class of speculators, as it has simplified their calculations ; the interference of an invisible Power, is a thing so independent and mysterious, that it is very difficult to adjust its place and value among the elements of the calculation ; but let the whole matter be reduced to a plain account of so many men in arms against so many, and we go directly to the consequence without hesitation.

We could not deem it a favourable omen, when we observed the general, and we think unequalled, prevalence, in this Christian country, of so light an estimate of the dependence of human affairs on the Supreme Governor. Another very prominent circumstance, has been the apparent renunciation of all concern about the stability or subversion of the power of the Romish church. In times that are past, yet not so long past but we ourselves can remember them, this most impious, tyrannic, and cruel power was regarded as one of the most pernicious and hateful things on the face of the whole earth ; and its grand instrument, the inquisition, was considered as precisely the utmost reach of diabolical contrivance and malignity. English protestants could not hear the words popery and inquisition, without instantly thinking of crowds of racked, or burning, or bleeding martyrs ; of numerous other pious and holy men perishing in dungeons and deserts ; of soldiers, stimulated by priests to merit heaven by absolutely wantoning in the torments and death of women and children ; of midnight spies, of domestics exhorted and threatened into informers, of the general interdiction of divine knowledge by severe punishments for reading the bible, of an infinite swarm of lazy, bigoted, and vicious ecclesiastics, of the worship of

saints and of images, and of a train of follies and impieties, in doctrine and ceremony, far too numerous to be named. Nothing inspired greater delight than any symptoms of the approaching fall of this most execrable power; our anticipations of the prosperity or decline of any of the political states of Europe depended very much, perhaps more than on any other thing whatever, on the degree in which they respectively assisted or opposed that impious and cruel hierarchy: while many devout and learned writers, and a multitude of their readers, rejoiced to discern any coincidence between passing events and the prophecies of the fall of antichrist. In looking round on the states that support this enormous usurpation on the liberty, the reason, and the conscience of mankind, it was notorious that Spain and Portugal were the most faithful subjects of the slavery and abettors of the tyranny. When the recent movement in Spain became so extensive as apparently to promise to raise the whole effective population in arms, we began to entertain a most earnest sentiment, something between the desponding desire and the hope, that now, at last, not only a repelling boundary, much more lofty and impervious than the Pyrenees, would be raised against the irruptions, on one side, at least, of the grand tyrant of Europe, but also that, in some way or other, the strongest hold of popery would be eventually shaken into ruins. It was not to be expected that any direct measures, for reducing the inveterate ascendancy of the popish establishment, would form a part of the first revolutionary proceedings. But, as we trusted that all the genius and knowledge in the country would be called forth by the great occasion, and that the most able, enlightened, and liberal men would soon come to occupy the vacated powers of government, we flattered ourselves they would be too wise, as statesmen, to be bigoted as catholics. We presumed they could not but feel that the freedom which deserved to be sought at the expense of a prolonged and direful conflict with the greatest military power the world ever saw, would remain imperfect, dishonoured, and in a great measure useless, unless something were at least gradually effected, for reducing that despotism of superstition, which would else be a fatal obstacle to all grand schemes of national improvement. We thought that the great commotion, which would excite throughout the whole nation twenty times more bold thought and strong passion, than had prevailed in it at any one period for centuries past, would give

such a shock to the dominion of superstition, as to loosen and crack all its impositions and institutions. And why should we forbear to add, that we had a new ground of hope, when this liberal and protestant nation determined to put forth all its immense strength in aid of the Spanish cause, and when it was avowed in both countries that without this aid that cause could not triumph? It was quite natural to conclude, that this protestant nation, which had but very recently testified its antipathy to popery with an ardour of zeal almost flaming into fanaticism, would accompany this assistance, if not with the stipulated condition, at least with the most powerful recommendation, of some remission of the rigours of spiritual slavery; a recommendation which, under such circumstances, could not have failed to be effectual.

Thus, we had begun to indulge anticipations of momentous changes in favour of intellect, conscience, and religion, to arise from the great movement in assertion of national liberty. When, however, in the simplicity of our hearts, we began to give vent to some of these imaginations, in such little humble circles of politicians as we can be supposed to be admitted in, we found our notions received with a smile of contempt. We were told, that these are not times for recalling the antiquated trifling controversies of divines about popery and protestantism; that enlightened politicians are now of opinion, that the iniquitous institutions of the superstition of any country ought to be held sacred and inviolate in that country; that if a few protestants have sometimes got themselves into the dungeons of the inquisition, it was their own fault, as they might have gone quietly to mass like their neighbours; that, in short, any such concerns as that of securing such things as liberty of religious profession and worship, are altogether beneath the notice of states, and those who preside over them, in great conjunctures of their affairs. We were rather plainly told, that such grand events as those of the present time are not for the understandings of persons who can never advert to any great subject without making it little by some conceit about Providence, and whose first grovelling anxiety and last, in political commotions and revolutions, fixes itself on no greater an object than what it calls the advancement of pure religion,—meaning perhaps, in truth, nothing better than the progress of methodism.

On this we betook ourselves, for a while, to the silent ob-

servations of events and opinions, and soon perceived that we had indeed entertained a very fantastic kind of sentiments. Except a number of religionists of the most antiquated stamp, nobody seemed to recollect any harm that popish intolerance had ever done ; the inquisition was almost become venerable, as a fortress of the faith against modern infidelity ; at any rate, it was a powerful support of the ancient established order of things ; a most bigoted tribe of priests had our cordial license to hunt heretics, and keep the people in the most wretched and debasing ignorance, if they would only make sanguinary addresses (many of them were in the most savage style) to rouse the population to war. Let but the enemy be destroyed, and the conquerors might celebrate their victory, for any thing our nation seemed to care, with an *auto da fé*. The very fortresses, that Englishmen might shed their blood in recovering from the enemy, might be allowed to become, the following year or month, the prisons of those who wished for liberty to profess the faith of their generous deliverers. All were enthusiastic, and very justly so, for the rescue of Spain and Portugal ; governors and people, debaters, newswriters, reviewers, all breathed fire against Attila and his barbarians ; and when these invaders were exterminated, the glorious result was to be—what was it to be ? what in all reason ought it to be ? As far as we could understand, it was to be a full restoration of that order of things, under which those countries had, for ages, invariably presented the most melancholy spectacle of imprisoned mind, of tyrannic superstition, and of national prostration, in all Europe. We say, a full restoration ; for there was not, that we remember, a single particular of the whole wretched economy specified for reformation, in the event of success, or as a condition of our powerful and expensive co-operation to secure it.

That great improvement of modern times, the division of labour, may have extended much further than we were aware. In some past periods there have been in England politicians and statesmen of very great note in their day, who assumed it as a part of their vocation, to promote, to the utmost of their power, in their transactions with allies, the security of conscientious men and reforming reasoners, against the persecuting malice of a spiritual tyranny. It may be, that now the narrowed province of this class of men no longer includes this concern. This may be ;—but then another thing also

may be ; if they have excluded from their department a concern which the Divine Governor has included within their duty, it may be that schemes and enterprises, in professed vindication of liberty, are, on account of this indifference or contempt, shown to the most sacred branch of liberty, destined to fail. The division of labour might be carried so far as to be fatal ; if the officers and crew of a damaged ship at sea, should choose to say, that *their* business is to navigate the vessel and defend it against the enemy, and that as to the leak, which is fast filling the hold, *that* belongs to the shipwright's business in the port, the consequence would not be very doubtful. We began to fear, a good many months since, that such a fate awaited our grand undertaking in favour of Spain. For the last twenty years, it had appeared most evident, that Providence was hastening the fall of incomparably the most dreadful tyrant that ever arrogated the dominion of Europe,—the popish superstition ; it had become the general persuasion of wise and good men, both from examining the Scriptures, and observing the course of events, that this divine process of emancipation, which had been so ardently longed and prayed for by millions of the devoutest and holiest men that ever inhabited the earth, would proceed rapidly to its completion ; and therefore it was impossible to repel the conviction, independently of all calculations of comparative military forces, that the mightiest effort in the power of any nation to make, if a chief object of that effort was absolutely to maintain the popish system in all its ancient rigour, must fail ; and that any other nation, especially if a protestant nation, lending its assistance *on such terms as to adopt and promote this object*, must eventually retire with disaster and humiliation. This object, in its most decided form, was invariably avowed in Spain ; and as far as the public are yet informed, the whole resources of this country were pledged, without a stipulation or a remonstrance against a system which would doom any advocate of pure religion to imprisonment, or tortures, or death. Our politicians may say it was not within their province, “ not in their competence,” to take account of any such matters ; but neither, therefore, was it permitted to be in their competence, with the whole vast means of this country at their disposal, to accomplish any part of the great political project. A most signal fatality has appeared to accompany every measure and movement ; the results are before us ; Spain is overwhelmed,

and our armies, after months and months of inefficiency and ostentation, are driven out under circumstances of the utmost affliction and mortification, and followed by the most bitter taunt that ever stung this nation, that "in spite of the English, the inquisition, the overgrown monkish establishments, and the oppressive privileges of the nobles, have ceased to exist in Spain." What a memorable fact it will be in the history of these times, that the enlightened nation, which had so long been the grand champion of protestantism, should have justly incurred this poignant and triumphant reproach from a conqueror, who is himself a pretended papist! The wonder, however, will relate solely to the principles on which the enterprise was undertaken; there will be no wonder at the consequence: if one of the most emphatic petitions which good men could have concurred to address to Heaven, for the Spanish people, would have been, that such institutions might fall,—and if the intimations of revelation combined with the recent and contemporary train of events, to give solemn signs that the papal institutions were in fact just ready to fall,—what was the result to be reasonably apprehended, when a protestant nation should undertake to exert its utmost force that, as connected with the other establishments of the unhappy people, these institutions might stand? Was it to be expected that out of pure favour to the English, as protestants, the Supreme Disposer would suspend his operations for destroying the popish domination?

We gladly believe there are times yet to come, when politicians will be aware that the question, what monarch or what dynasty is to rule any particular portion of the earth, is an exceedingly trifling matter in the view of Him that governs it all, compared with the promotion or the repression of the cause of pure Christianity. How many more disastrous calculations and events are to enrich our history with melancholy instruction for their benefit, remains to be seen; and it is not difficult to imagine new occasions for practically trying, whether it is really a judicious principle in politics, for a Christian and protestant nation to lend its force and sanction formally to maintain and consolidate the most pernicious and cruel superstitions of every country, where it has an absolute or an influential power. This point should be decided; and if all the experiments are to be made, on an assumption of the affirmative, it is not too much to anticipate that the series

may be very short, and that the result may be recorded on the monumental ruins of a great empire.

Some readers may perhaps here allege, that the martial despot that has been *successful*, is also a supporter of superstition; that he inserted in the new constitution for Spain, framed at Bayonne, an article expressing that no religion but popery should be legally tolerated, and that he carried this into effect in agreeing to the first article of capitulation, proposed by the inhabitants of Madrid. We may answer, first, it cannot reasonably surprise us, if the Divine Being should manifest a much severer indignation against the formal support of popish superstition, by a nation long eminent for zealous protestantism, than against even the same support by a nation long equally eminent for its zealous popery. Secondly, though Napoleon does pretend, and in some degree practise, an adherence to the Romish church, yet all Europe sees that he is, in effect, its enemy and destroyer; he treats some of its most sacred institutions with contempt, and for his own purposes is gradually abolishing the various organs of power that made it so formidable. As far, therefore, as an able, powerful, bad man, who does every thing from motives of selfish policy and ambition, may be a fit agent, under the divine government, for breaking up by degrees the dominion under which reason and conscience have so long been reduced to suffer, the present agitator of nations seems the right operator.

We have thus endeavoured to explain how we soon began to despair, on a religious ground, of a cause, for the success of which our anxiety, in a political reference, most warmly sympathized with that of our countrymen in general. We will now venture one or two brief observations on the political grounds of hope, afforded by the first stages of the grand movement.

That a nation in arms cannot be conquered, is perhaps a proposition, like many others that sound very well, of but little meaning. The thing cannot be realized; there never can *be* a nation in arms. Say that the men capable of bearing arms, that is, not too young, nor too old, nor too unhealthy, are as much as a sixth part of the whole population; this will indeed give a most formidable list in such a country as Spain. But then how evident it is, that only a slender minority of this enrolment will ever come into action. A

very large proportion of these competent men must be employed in preparing the furniture of war for those who actually take the field; a large proportion of them must attend to the indispensable concerns of agriculture; millers, and numerous manufacturers and shopkeepers, must keep to their business, if the population is to be regularly supplied with the most direct necessities; many of the enumerated men must stay to take care of their sick, their aged, or their infant relatives: in a catholic country a number are under ecclesiastical restriction; a considerable number of men to write and print, are as necessary, in such a juncture, as men to fight; many must be employed in every district, in concerns of council and police; a number, in almost any imaginable war, will join the enemy, at any point where he has been signally successful. We will add only one other class, that is, cowards, who positively will not fight at all, and whom it would require more than half of those that will fight, to attempt to hunt and capture and coerce into battle; of these there naturally must be a very large number in every nation of Europe; and these, in addition to their timidity, will generally be sceptical enough as to the necessity of the war itself; such concessions as *they* would have made, and as they think ought to have been made, rather than provoke so dreadful an extremity, would have averted it.

We have heard commonly enough, of late, of five or six hundred thousand warriors being ready to march, or even of a "million of heroes panting to rush on the enemy, and resolved to conquer or perish;" the absurdity of such flourishes might be apparent, on a moment's reflection, which is enough to convince us that though we may talk of "rising in a mass," and of a "nation in arms," it is in fact but a comparatively small proportion of the inhabitants physically capable of acting in arms, that can at any time, in any civilized country, be brought into military operation. Instead of the innumerable myriads which many of us seemed to imagine would drive on like the moving sand of the Arabian desert, and absolutely overwhelm the first large French army that should venture to present its front in Spain; it was very doubtful whether the Spanish nation, even if as generally inspired with patriotic ardour as it is possible for any nation to be, and carrying to its utmost practicable extent the principle of rising in a mass, could have met the invader with a force numerically equal to

what he could without much difficulty bring, considering the immense number of his veterans at every moment in the posture of war, the authority and promptitude of his decrees of conscription, and the vast extent of populous territory over which those conscriptions operate. And as to the nature of this popular levy, it was to be considered what an uncouth element of armies it would continue to be for months, what a want there was of men of commanding military talents, to throw the rude though brave masses into system, and at the same time how soon their quality, and the capacity of their leaders, were likely to be brought to the test by the unremitting assault of their rapid and pertinacious enemy. It was also to be inquired, where were arsenals and magazines? whence were half the requisite number of fire-arms to be obtained? for as to other arms, there can be no greater folly than to talk of them. Possibly there are, in every country, a very small number of men so firm and so fierce that, without any other weapons than pikes, they would resolutely advance to the encounter with musketry and artillery; but as to the generality of the men that armies must be composed of, we think their defeat is infallible, whatever their numbers may be, if under no other protection than their pikes they are confronted with lines of fire-arms. For, setting aside the real difference of power between the two kinds of weapons, setting aside too the effect of manœuvres, the influence of *imagination* will be great and fatal. To unpractised troops, at least, guns seem something more than mere weapons; both by those that hold them, and those that meet them, it is almost felt as if they had a kind of formidable efficacy *in themselves*, their operation is so totally different from any other instrument that can be wielded by human hands. The explosion, the flash, and the infliction of death, at a great distance, by a missile that cannot be seen or avoided, inspire in the possessor of the weapon a certain consciousness of being a much more powerful agent, than he could have been by an implement, which had no other force than just that which he could give it by the grasp and movement of his hand, and no effect at a distance. And this influence of imagination operates with double force on the man who is advancing against these fire-arms, while himself has only an inert piece of wood or iron; he will look with despondency and contempt on his pointed stick, while the lines in his front

seem to be arrayed in thunder and lighting, while he is starting at the frequent hiss of bullets, and seeing his companions begin to fall.

But there would be no end of enumerating the disadvantages, under which the Spanish insurrection was to encounter such a tremendous invasion ; and, even admitting that insurrection to be as general and as enthusiastic as it was represented, a sanguine expectation of its success was probably entertained by very few of our countrymen, after it was ascertained to the conviction of all that Bonaparte had nothing to fear on the side of Germany, though the earnest desire did sometimes assume the language of confident hope. Still, however, it was not the less certain, that a great and resolute nation might accomplish wonders, against the largest regular armies, and the most experienced commanders ; as history was at hand to show, by various examples, and eminently above all others, that of the war of the French revolution. Certainly indeed, there was an ominous difference, in point of genius and system, between the leaders of the war against Spain and the commanders who had invaded France ; the highest genius, however, cannot work literally by magic ; and if the French legions could have been commanded by even still greater talents than those actually at their head, it was evident they must receive a dreadful shock if they were to be fallen upon by several hundred thousand men, impelled by the same enthusiasm of valour and obstinacy of perseverance which first confounded and finally routed the grand armies of Brunswick, Clairfait, and Saxe Coburg ; in the varieties of the conflict, besides, all the latent genius in the patriotic army would flame out, and declare whom nature had appointed, in contempt of all laws of rank, to the command. But then, there must be an adequate *cause* to inspire the popular levies with this heroic fury, which should persist to burn and to fight, in spite of all checks, and disasters, in fortress and in field, whether the battalions were in order or confusion, whether they found themselves separated into small bodies, or thrown together in a ponderous mass. And it might fairly be assumed, at the commencement of the Spanish revolution, that no less cause, no other cause, than that which had produced this grand effect in the French levy *en masse*, would now produce it in that of Spain. All know that the cause which operated thus on the revolutionary armies of France,

was the passion for liberty, continually inflamed to a state of enthusiasm, by having the object most simply and conspicuously placed in view. The object was placed before them, if we may so express it, "full orbéd;" it was liberty, not in the partial sense merely of being freed from the power and interference of the foreign monarchs who had sent the armies they were combating, and whose design, they had little doubt, it was to divide France among them as a conquest, and its people as slaves; but in the animating sense, also, of being no longer the subjects of a despot at home. A general could circulate through his camp an address like the following:—"Brave citizens, soldiers of liberty! prepare for battle; to drive these legions of Austria and Prussia from your country, which is henceforth to be the land of freedom. Your ancestors, in such times as those of Louis the Fourteenth, were sent to war on these very plains, at the mandate of a cruel tyrant, and his detestable minions; while they fought, with a forlorn and melancholy valour, their countrymen were all in chains, and a grand object for which they were to fight and bleed was, that their master might lose none of his power to keep them so. You, soldiers of liberty, are called to celebrate in arms the commencement of a new era. By the heroic charge that shall dash these armies of insolent invaders in wrecks and fragments back on the countries from which they came, you will confirm the doom that has crushed the internal despotism of our country in the dust. The Bastille is down, there is an end of a profligate court and arbitrary power, of the exclusive rights and the arrogance of nobles, of the rapacity of farmers-general, and the domination of papal priests. The impositions that so long fixed our slavery, by fettering our minds, are broken away; we have exploded the notion, as well as defied the power, of despotism; we have proclaimed that all political power essentially resides in the people, and that those to whom its exercise is to be entrusted, shall be chosen by the people, and most strictly accountable to them. We are a part of this emancipated and elevated people, and are boldly come forth to maintain their cause and our own. Is it not worthy of us to be brave in such a cause? Does not this land of new-born liberty deserve that we should fight for it like lions? There, in our sight, are the armies that are come to make us all slaves again. Let us fall upon them directly, and drive them into the Rhine."

Every mind responded to such an appeal; though imperfectly organized at first, though in various instances unskillfully or unfaithfully commanded, and though many times in a state of confusion and defeat, these half-disciplined battalions were "fraught with fire unquenchable;" they astonished, and after a while intimidated, their veteran antagonists, by returning incessantly to the charge; they were continually reinforced by more of their countrymen, animated with the same powerful sentiment, till at length the most famous legions and generals of Europe were overpowered, and driven away by an irresistible torrent. We can remember to have read, in the accounts of those times, that one morning, after several days of severe conflict, and very partial success, in Alsace, General Pichegru signified to the army that he felt it needful to give them repose that day; on which he was informed that they testified their disappointment, and expressed a strong and general wish to be led again to battle; they were led accordingly.—It would be as much beside the purpose to discuss here the correctness of that idea of liberty, which created such an almost preternatural energy in the people and the armies of France, as to notice what a wretched disappointment, and what a hateful despotism, were in reserve to terminate all their prospects. It is sufficient for our object, that a bold, grand idea of liberty, involving the annihilation of every thing that had oppressed and galled the people, and sent their advocates to the Bastile, under the old despotism, and quite clear of all counteractive considerations of this and the other aristocratical distinction or monopoly to be held sacred, and this or the other individual or family to be maintained in power,—it is enough that this idea inspired the energy, which flung the relics of the invading armies at the palace gates of those who had sent them. It is enough that every one can imagine in an instant, what would have been the effect in the camp of Jourdan or Pichegru, if information had come from Paris, of the provisional government, anxious to secure the rights and happiness of the people, having settled that, though neither a prince of Austria or of Prussia, nor exactly Louis the Sixteenth, must be king, yet the allegiance of the nation was inviolably due to some individual of the family, the Duke of Chartres for instance, on whose accession the government would go on in the same wise and popular manner that it had done a hundred years past.

The reader has anticipated all we could say in the application of these hints to the recent movement of the Spanish people. We shall content ourselves with very few words, as there is now probably no great difference of opinion among thinking men, relative to the original and progressive probabilities attendant on this memorable event. One single short question disposes of the whole speculation: Has liberty, in the sense in which alone it is of importance to a people, ever been fairly set before the Spanish nation? It is of the essence of this question, to reflect a moment on the condition of the Spanish nation previously to this event; we mean their condition as justly imputable to their own sovereigns, and their own system of government, exclusively of what evils may have accrued to them of late years from the French intrigues and ascendancy in their court. And according to all accounts, that condition was deplorable. Taken in a collective view, the people were ignorant, indolent, poor, dirty, and extravagantly superstitious, fond of tawdry shows and cruel sports, strangers, in a great measure, to ingenious and mechanic arts, stationary in almost all the points of civilization in which the other countries of Europe are advancing, hampered by a clumsy and perverse judicature, in short, bearing the most flagrant marks of an incorrigibly bad government. Thus matters had gone on during the reigns of successive monarchs, and during the reign of probably the last of the Bourbons in Spain, Charles the Fourth. At length, in consequence of we know not what intrigues and private arrangements, the sovereignty passed suddenly from him into the hands of his son, not, of course, without expostulation and repugnance on the part of the father, whose rights, according to all orthodox notions on the subject, were grossly violated by the transfer. All this while, however, a powerful neighbour, whose tenets concerning kingly rights, saving and excepting those of himself and his royal brothers, are deemed highly heretical, had *his* schemes of transfer prepared, and his machines in operation; and lo! in a moment both the kings vanish from Spain, and "our brother Joseph" succeeds to the throne. It was found that the two monarchs had been fascinated, as we read of unfortunate birds sometimes being, to throw themselves directly into the mouth of the great serpent. At this juncture began the commotion which has so deeply and justly interested all Europe. A just indignation at the

base and treacherous proceedings of Napoleon, rose so high, in some parts of the country, as to issue in an energetic call of the whole nation to arms. This was a tremendous crisis, and a most awful summons ; for it might be held certain, that the enemy, defied and challenged in this unexpected quarter, and this new manner, would discharge the whole collected thunders of his martial empire, and, even if unsuccessful, would desperately prosecute the contest with the last battalion that would adhere to his standard. And if such would be his determination, what a scene the patriots had before them ! If the emergency should prove to require it, he would be able, at a moderate computation, to bring three hundred thousand soldiers, in successive armies, into Spain. It would be idle to calculate that such a force, a large proportion of it veterans accustomed to victory, and commanded by such a set of generals as never were combined in any other service, could be everywhere encountered, and finally repelled, by less than four or five hundred thousand of the patriots. And if the war should continue even no more than six or eight months, how many great battles would there be, beside the incessant course of partial actions and bloody skirmishes ? Would it have been at all an extravagant prediction that, during so many months of such a war, two hundred thousand devoted Spaniards might perish ? And then what miseries would be suffered by the defenceless inhabitants, what numbers of aged and sick persons, and women and children, would be exposed to terror, to want, and in many cases even to death ; what desolation of the country, what destruction of habitations, what ruin of agriculture, and what famine, as the probable consummation of all ! This picture is inexpressibly too faint for the prospect, which was, or ought to have been, distinctly presented to the minds of those who first summoned, and all who seconded them in summoning, their countrymen to combat with the whole power of France. Now then, we may ask, solemnly, what was that OBJECT, for the attainment of which the country was to be laid open to this most gigantic and enormous train of horrors ? What was that ultimate transcendent felicity, the thought of which was to inspire such multitudes of men with the perfectly new sentiment, a contempt of wounds and death ; which was to animate the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of these men to urge them on to battle, and which was to reconcile the whole

population to have their country placed, for months, in a situation about parallel to that of a forest infested by tigers? At the very least, that object could be no less than the noblest system of national liberty that ever blessed any people.

Let our readers recall to mind the manifestoes, and addresses to the people, issued by the provincial Juntas that took the lead, and judge whether this *was* the object. Some of those publications were strongly conceived, and eloquently expressed. They powerfully expatiated on the treacherous arts by which the nation and the royal family had been inveigled, on the excesses committed in some places by the French troops, and on the glory of revenge; on which last topic we regretted to see the patriots adopting a language, and endeavouring to rouse a spirit, of savage ferocity, fit only for the most barbarous age. But the accomplishment of revenge could be only a very subordinate object with the patriotic Juntas; nor could it be expected to prove an object adequate, in those parts of the country which had not immediately suffered or witnessed the outrages committed by the French, to stimulate the population to turn their meadows into fields of battle, and expose their persons to the sword; especially as it would be obvious that as soon as Joseph should be enthroned, the excesses of the French must, even for his sake, cease. What, then, it must still be asked, was the grand ultimate object to be attained by so dreadful a war, even presuming it must be successful? And, as far as we have at any time been able to discover, the grand, the sublime object, which was to animate the people to such a warfare, to compensate its infinity of miseries, and to crown the final victory, was no other than *a return to the old state of things*, with the mere exception of French influence, and the mischievous power of the Prince of the Peace, at the Spanish court. None of the indispensable innovations, none of the grand reforms, for the want of which that people had been so long pitied or despised by all the civilized world, were specifically held out, as any part of the incitement or the prize; no limitations of the royal power, or the royal expenses, no reduction of the privileges of the aristocracy, no restraints on ecclesiastical arrogance, no political existence to be given to the people, no method of enabling them to participate or influence their government, no abrogation of the barbarous municipal regulations against the freedom of trade, no improvements of political economy that

should contribute to supply clothes to those in rags, and food to those almost starving. No, there was nothing of all this held out to the people; they were to draw on them, to fight, and to expel, the whole power of France, at the dreadful cost that we have described, and then Ferdinand and the old government were to be triumphantly restored, and all would be well! Hundreds of thousands of them were summoned to rush out gallantly to perish, in order that the remainder might continue to be the poor, ragged, forlorn nation, that they were, and are.

If a project for exciting the people to plunge into an unfathomable gulf of miseries and death for such an object, may be forgiven to the statesmen and prelates of Spain, whose catholic imaginations are so stored with prodigies and miracles, what, however, will sober judges hereafter say of the politicians of England, at the memorable juncture? By what reach of conjecture will it be possible to explain, how they, the enlightened inhabitants of a free country, in which they have so often eloquently declaimed on the glory of having permitted no despotism here, on the energy with which noble ideas of liberty will inspire a people to resist the armies of a tyrant, and on the wretchedness of living under a government like that of Spain; in what way can it be made intelligible, how these enlightened politicians should conceive it possible to rouse a whole people to arms, at the peril of such awful consequences, by any objects held out to them by the Juntas? or should deem it a desirable thing if they could,—excepting, indeed, with the mere view of diverting the danger a while longer from our own country, and giving, in our stead, Spanish victims to the French sabres.

What was Ferdinand, or any other individual, to the unhappy people of Spain, who were to leave their families, to have their cottages burnt, to famish, or to bleed for his sake? What had he ever done for them, or attempted to do? If he had been a thousand times more their friend than they had ever found him to be, by what law of justice or common sense could it be, that countless multitudes should go to be slaughtered on his account?—not to notice the absurdity of summoning a nation to fight for a person who was, as to any possible connexion with them, to all intents, a nonentity.

For a while, we still hoped, that the name of Ferdinand would be suffered to sink, by degrees, out of the concern; and

that the project would assume, at length, the bold aspect of a really popular cause. In this hope, we anxiously waited the assembling of the Supreme Junta. At last they assembled, verified their powers, and took the oath which they had solemnly framed. We read that oath, and have never since, for one instant, entertained the smallest hope of the Spanish cause. There were some most vague and insignificant expressions in that oath, about taking care of the interest of the nation ; but its absolute sum and substance was, popery and Ferdinand. The first of these, avowed in its utmost extent and grossness, we considered, as we have already attempted to explain, as enough to ensure the fate of the whole design, on account of its aspect relatively to the divine government ; and the latter, as furnishing far too insignificant a motive to animate a nation to battle. The Junta began by declaring they had no power to assemble the Cortez, in other words, that they could do nothing for the people ; they went on to restrict the freedom of the press, and now,—the world is ceasing to inquire what they are doing.

No room remains for remarks on the measures of our government, relating to the vast preparations and armies professedly intended for the assistance of Spain ; what is worse, we have no room for adding many remarks on the book which has given occasion to this article.

The Cid (i. e. Lord) Rodrigo Diaz was a most renowned hero, of the eleventh century, who was sometimes in the service of the Christian monarch of Spain, and sometimes maintained himself independent in his conquests from the Moorish part of the country. There are several ancient records, and an epic poem, concerning him, in the Spanish language ; Mr. Southey has formed the present work, by combining and harmonizing the several relations together, faithfully translating, as he assures us, what he has selected from each, and noting, in the margin of each paragraph, the work, and the part of the work from which it is taken. The translation is in the antiquated English dialect, which appears to us to be, in general, pretty successfully supported.

The story is something between a history and a romance ; and Mr. Southey has not attempted to distinguish what is true from what is fabulous ; the Spanish literature evidently supplied no means for doing this, nor would it have been worth while, had it been practicable, as the fabulous parts are pro-

bably quite as amusing as the true, and give as striking a picture of the times. In this view the work is very interesting. We are transported into an age and country, where the gentlemen go out to work in the morning, with their steeds and lances, as regularly as the farmers with their team and plough, and indeed, a good deal more so. The *Cid* surpasses all his contemporaries for diligence and success in such laudable occupation. His course of enterprise is so rapid, so uniformly successful, and so much of a piece in other respects, that in some parts of the book the mind is quite tired of following him. In many other parts, however, the narrative is eminently striking, especially in describing some of the single combats, and most of all, in the long account of an extraordinary court of justice, held on two young princes or noblemen, who had abused their wives, the daughters of the *Cid*. Nothing in the whole library of romantic history can exceed this narrative. The *Cid* appears a humane warrior, according to the standard of those times, and yet he could calmly be guilty of the most infernal cruelties; for instance, burning alive many Moors, in the siege of Valencia. The destruction of "infidels," indeed, in any and every manner, seems to have been regarded as one of the noblest exercises of Christian virtue. Three or four of his constant companions in arms display such magnanimous bravery, and such an affectionate fidelity to him, as to excite the reader's interest and partiality in no small degree. A prominent feature of the story throughout, is the frequent recurrence of religious and superstitious ideas, in the discourse of the warriors, in all situations.

XX.

MODERN EGYPTIANS.

An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians ; written in Egypt during the Years 1833, 4, and 5 ; partly from Notes made during a former Visit to that Country in the Years 1825, 6, 7, and 8. By EDWARD WILLIAM LANE.

A CURIOUS and reflective mind will not fall on many subjects more attractive than the relation of ancient regions, such as history and monuments have recorded them, to the same regions viewed in their modern and present state. It is striking to consider how widely they are, as it were, estranged from their primitive selves ; insomuch that the mere local and nominal identity has less power to retain them before us under the original idea fixed on the place and name, than their actual condition has to present them as domains of a foreign and alien character. They are seen divested to so great a degree, of that which had created a deep interest in contemplating them, that we consign them to a distant province of our imagination, where they are the objects of a reversed order of feelings. We regard them as having disowned themselves, while retaining their ancient names, and their position on the earth.

We say, "divested to so great a degree ;" for if the regions be eminently remarkable for natural features—mountains, rivers, defiles, and peculiar productions—these do, indeed, continue to tell something of ancient times. In keeping under our view a groundwork of the scenes we had meditated on, they recall to us by association what once was there, and is there no longer. But they do so to excite a disturbance by incongruity. What is there *now*, rises in the imagination to confound or overpower the images of what was there *then*. So that, till we can clear away this intrusion, we have an un-

couth blending of the venerable ancient and the vulgar modern.

Again ; there are seen in those territories striking relics of the human labours of the remote ages ; which are thus brought back more impressively to the imagination than by the most prominent features of nature. But these disclaim more decidedly still, in the name of that departed world to which they entirely belong, all relationship with the existing economy of man and his concerns. They are emphatically solitary and estranged amidst that economy. Their aspect, in their gloom and ruin, is wholly to the past, as if signifying a disdain of all that later times have brought around them. And if, in some instances, man is trying to avail himself of some parts or appendages of them for his ordinary uses of resort or dwelling, we may, by a poetical license of thought, imagine them loathing the desecration. Still, as the vulgarities *do* obtrude themselves in contiguity, the contemplatist cannot wholly abstract himself from the annoyance.

Some of those scenes of ruin, indeed, and especially and pre-eminently the tract and vast remaining masses of Babylon, are placed apart by their awful doom, as suffering no encroachment and incongruous association of human occupancy or vicinity. There is no *modern* Babylon. It is secluded and alone in its desolation ; clear of all interference with its one character as monumental of ancient time and existence. If the contemplative spectator could sojourn there alone and with a sense of safety, his mind would be taken out of the actual world, and carried away to the period of Babylon's magnificence, its multitudes, its triumphs, and the divine denunciations of its catastrophe.

Egypt has monuments of antiquity surpassing all others on the globe. History cannot tell when the most stupendous of them were constructed ; and it would be no improbable prophecy that they are destined to remain to the end of time. Those enormous constructions, assuming to rank with nature's ancient works on the planet, and raised, as if to defy the powers of man and the elements and time to demolish them, by a generation that retired into the impenetrable darkness of antiquity when their work was done, stand on the surface in solemn relation to the subterraneous mansions of death. All the vestiges bear an aspect intensely and unalterably grave. There is inscribed on them a language which tells the inquirer

that its import is not for him or the men of his times. Persons that lived thousands of years since remain in substance and form, death everlastingly embodied, as if to emblem to us the vast chasm, and the non-existence of relation, between their race and ours. A shade of mystery rests on the whole economy to which all these objects belonged. Add to this our associations with the region from those memorable transactions and phenomena recorded in the sacred history, by which the imagination has been, so to speak, permanently located in it, as a field crowded with primeval interests and wonders.

It may then be asserted, perhaps, that Egypt surpasses every tract of the world (we know not that Palestine is an exception) in the power of fascinating a contemplative spirit, as long as the contemplation shall dwell exclusively on the *ancient* scene. But there is a *modern* Egypt. And truly it is an immense transition from the supernatural phenomena, the stupendous constructions, the frowning grandeur, the veiled intelligence, the homage, almost to adoration, rendered to death, and the absorption of a nation's living powers in the passion for leaving impregnable monuments, in which after their brief mortal existence they should remain memorable forever,—to the present Egypt as described by Mr. Lane. But this Egypt, as it is spread around the wonderful spectacles which remain to give us partially an image of what once it was, disturbs the contemplation by an interference of the coarse vulgar modern with the solemn superb ancient. At least to a reader who has not enjoyed the enviable privileges of beholding those spectacles, and so practically experiencing how much they may absorb and withdraw the mind from all that is around them, it would seem that the presence of a grovelling population, with their miserable abodes, and daily employments, combined with the knavish insolent annoyance of the wearers of a petty authority, must press on the reflective spectator of pyramids, temples, and catacombs, with an effect extremely adverse to the musing abstraction in which he endeavours to carry his mind back to the ancient economy. As to any advantage to arise from *contrast*, there is no need of it. And besides, the two things are too far in disproportion *for* contrast. Who would let hovels and paltry mosques come into comparison at all with the pyramids and the temple of Carnac?

Mr. Lane has surrendered to the antiquarian and imaginative tribe the vestiges of the ancient country, and strictly ad-

hered to his purpose of describing its present state and people. This he has done in such a manner that his work may be considered as nearly superseding all the slighter sketches conveyed to us in the narratives of the numerous recent travellers. He has possessed the advantage over them of a protracted residence, of having one special design to prosecute, of a competent mastery of the language ; and of possessing a certain flexibility of adaptation to the notions and habits of the people, by which he has insinuated himself into a familiarity and confidence with them quite out of reach of any passing visitant. The result is a work surprisingly comprehensive and particular. His vigilant inquisitiveness has gone into all the detail of dress, domestic manners, conventional observances, superstitious notions and ceremonies, ordinary occupations, traffic, political economy, official administration, and characteristic diversities of the several sections of the heterogeneous population ; which are exhibited with a minuteness and precision, to make us marvel at his untiring patience of investigation. All is set forth in the plain language of an honest intention and labour to give a matter-of-fact account of things, without any flourishing off into sentiment or ambitious speculation. It could not be *so amusing* a book as those which have been made up of picturesque touches and incidents of adventure ; it necessarily partakes of what we are apt to call dry ; but it will be the repository to be consulted by every person who wants to know any thing about any part or circumstance of the character, habits, and condition, of the modern inhabitants of the old realms of the Pharaohs.

The author's observations were chiefly made in Cairo, the capital, and its precincts ; but that portion of the country may, he says, be taken as very competently representing the general character and state of the nation, and of the Mahomedan world to a much wider extent than the Egyptian section ; for, says he,

“ In every point of view, Musr (or Cairo) must be regarded as the first Arab city of our age ; and the manners and customs of its inhabitants are particularly interesting, as they are a combination of those which prevail most generally in the towns of Arabia, Syria, and the whole of Northern Africa, and in a great degree in Turkey. There is no other place in which we can obtain so complete a knowledge of the more civilized classes of the Arabs.”

It is out of the question to attempt any thing like an analy-

sis of such a multitude and aggregate of particulars. All we can do is to make a few brief notices, here and there, in passing over the eight hundred closely printed pages—a journey through which, though thus commodiously guided and put at our ease, it is really not a light adventure to follow the author, who had himself, at every step, to make it with the slowness of the most marked and deliberate attention. Had he lived in the early times of the country, he would have been an excellent superintending officer to take note of each added stone, in one of the huge piles which consumed a whole life of a generation of labourers.

His first observations respect the climate ; which, he says, is remarkably salubrious through the greater part of the year ; more so in the southern part of the Upper, though the heat is 10° higher there than in the Lower Egypt ; where the thermometer, “in the depth of winter,” (an expression of strange sound for Egypt,) in the afternoon, in the shade, is at from 50° to 60° ; in the hottest season from 90° to 100° ; the heat still not very oppressive, being attempered by a northerly breeze. In default of the more pompous relations between the ancient and the modern, there is still in noble superabundance the plague of flies, lice, and other insect nuisances. Precautions more than formerly are adopted against the invasion of the plague, so named by eminence. But in 1835 it was introduced from Turkey, extended over the whole country, and carried off in Cairo alone 80,000, one third of the inhabitants.

There is a very lengthened description, illustrated by numerous wood-cuts, of the houses, in all their diversities, proportions, and adjustments. The best of them seem such as may well content the “true believers,” during their probation for the more luxurious abodes promised them by the prophet ; “but the dwellings of the lower orders, particularly those of the peasants, are very mean ; mostly built of unbaked bricks ; some of them mere hovels.” The villages are raised on the progressively accumulating and rising heaps, made by the ruin and rubbish of former ones ; thus maintaining a proper height above the inundation, by rising in proportion to the continual rise of the alluvial plains and the bed of the river.

The population, of which there is no authentic statement, can hardly, Mr. Lane thinks, be estimated at so many as 2,000,000, since its prodigious diminution by the pasha’s sweeping conscriptions for his wars, of at least 200,000, that

is, a full half of all the men fit for military service. This goes beyond the rate of our once terrible neighbour of France ; and surely threatens a similar eventual prostration to the minor potentate. The calculation for the several classes is, Mahomedan Egyptians (peasants and townspeople,) 1,750,000 ; Christian Egyptians (Copts,) 150,000 ; Osmanlees, or Turks, 10,000 ; Syrians, 5000 ; Greeks, 5000 ; Armenians, 2000 ; Jews, 5000.

As dress is a main thing by which mankind all over the world wish to be taken account of, our author pays the Egyptians the compliment of dissecting and delineating theirs, through every article, and fold, and colour, and change, and through each grade of society, with a detail and critical precision which we are confident no tailor or mantua-maker in all Cairo could equal, even if as handy at the pen and pencil as at the needle. To us it appears, as shown in the engravings,* very ungainly and cumbrous in many of its modes. Draperies so unshaped, —and so hung, and loaded, and swathed on the figure,—as some of them appear, must impose a total unfitness for action, even for walking, more than a short measured amble ; and by the very quantity, garment heaped on garment, must greatly add to the grievance of heat. They needed not to outvie the customary Turkish costumes, in the ambition of casting a broad shadow on the ground. But of course this excess is the exclusive privilege and grace of the better sort, who can afford to parade a wardrobe, and are exempt from the humbler calls to action. The old and approved operation of walking is for them nearly out of the question. A handsome race of asses has the honour of saving them that trouble.

Mr. Lane is pleased with the personal appearance of both sexes, about the period of maturity. But unfortunately the females “generally attain their highest degree of perfection at the age of fifteen or sixteen ;” when, and for a few years longer, many of them are very beautiful in figure and countenance ; but are under the doom of thenceforward declining ; till they have lost, at the age of forty, all the graces but those sometimes retained in the eyes ; which, “with few exceptions,

* We may as well notice the wood-engravings here, once for all. They are after drawings by the author, in number exceeding a hundred : not of high pretensions in elegance of art ; but bearing, in their plain simplicity, strong marks of faithful representation. They were not meant, he says, “to embellish the pages, but to explain the text.”

are black, large, and of a long almond form, with long and beautiful lashes, and an exquisitely soft bewitching expression : eyes more beautiful can hardly be conceived : their charming effect is much heightened by the concealment of the other features." We must take the describer's authority for what we have some difficulty to conceive, that this effect is also greatly heightened by a practice of blackening the edge of the eye-lids, both above and below the eye, with a powder called *kohhl*. For the antiquity of the practice, reference is made to the example of Jezebel, and to Ezekiel xxiii. 40. Another cosmetic device is the well-known use of *henna* leaves, to dye of a yellowish red or a deep orange colour the nails, tips of the fingers, palm of the hand, toes, and other parts of the feet.

Children are regarded as a great blessing ; and with a reason subject to less exception than in many other parts of the world, if, as we are here told, their behaviour to their parents as they grew up is always exemplary. As a consequence that looks odd at first sight, their childhood is kept in a state disgustingly squalid ; even a lady finished off in dress, and scenting with her perfumes the street through which she is walking, shall be seen leading her little favourite "with a face besmeared with dust, and clothes appearing as if they had been worn for months without ever being washed." This is from dread of the *evil eye*, which, vainly coveting the sweet creature, would blast it to spite the owner. But the mind is worse off than the person can be ; the state of education being as wretched as political slavery and religious superstition can require. The females are not educated at all. Very few of even the women of the higher order can read, or have learnt to say their prayers. They must not pray in the mosque, and need not pray at home. For boys there are numerous schools, in which, with the letters, they are taught to recite chapters of the koran. Writing is an accomplishment nearly confined to those intended for offices, or the services of the mosque. One of the very first elements of their instruction is "religious pride, with hatred of the Christians, and all sects but their own."

A long chapter on Religion and Laws, after distinguishing the religious parties, respectively denominated after the doctors whose tenets they have adopted, recites in substance the doctrines and prescriptions of the koran ; and goes through a

minute detail of the formularies of devotion, an odious compost of the ideas of the divine unity, power, and goodness, with the principles of a vile and virulent superstition; the noxiousness of the latter destroying the practical good of the former, and vitiating even the good moral rules and sentiments which are blended in the institute. The grave frivolities and grimaces of the ritual are a worthy decoration of the depravity of the principles. The Moslems of Egypt have their proportion of formalists and fanatics; but collectively considered, they cannot make very high claims for that conscientious faithfulness of observance, which some of our travelling describers of Turkey have taken pleasure in celebrating and exaggerating. In the habits of many there is great laxity, and in not a few an almost total neglect. The rigours of their grand solemnity of the Ramadan, regarded as of more importance than any other religious appointment, are unscrupulously melted down in secret by many of the wealthy classes. The majority, however, strictly keep the fast; which, says Mr. Lane, "is fatal to numerous persons in a weak state of health." The pilgrimage to Mecca and Mount Ararat, once in every true believer's life, though nominally of comprehensive obligation, admits of some compromise and exception in favour of poverty and ill health; "but many neglect the duty who cannot plead a lawful excuse; nor are they reproached for so doing." The interdicted wine and spirituous liquors are no strangers in the concealed recesses of many a Mahomedan dwelling. As to the one article of swine's flesh, it seems they are veritably and universally conscientious.

The laws, conformably to the koran, concerning marriage, concubinage, and divorce, and the property adjustments in each case, are as multifarious as any Mahomedan or even Christian jurisconsult, and as lax in morality as any libertine, could well desire. The worthy husband, when he conceives any dislike, or perhaps has too many on his hands, has only to say, "I divorce thee," or, "Thou art divorced," and to pay her some trifle as a return of a part of her dowry, which he had kept back from the first against such an occasion. He may take her again if the whim should take *him*, should she have no objection; and in certain cases whether she consent or not. But a woman cannot separate herself from her husband against his will, unless for some very considerable

fault on his part, such as cruel treatment or neglect; nor then without a process in the *cadi's* court. There are, however, fully as many provisions in the legal system in favour of women, as could be expected where they are held mentally and morally of such small account.

Under the article Religion, it should be noticed that the *imams* are by no means so exclusively sacerdotal, consecrated, privileged, and endowed a class as our Christian clergy are constituted. One point of distinction is, (rather hard on the *imams*, in the comparative adjustment,) that they "enjoy no respect but what their reputed piety or learning may obtain them." Besides this, they are liable, for misconduct, to be displaced, with loss of salary. And while in the service of the mosque, of which the emolument is very small, they gain their livelihood chiefly by other employments, as tradesmen, schoolmasters, &c.

In looking at the chapter on Government, we must congratulate Mr. Lane on Mahomed Ali's inability to read English. Otherwise we should think that if, in case of his being introduced into the presence, he were to catch sight of his own book, lying on the table or divan, it would be rather an alarming spectacle. His rapid glance would alternate between the book and the visage of despotic power—the *vultus instantis tyranni*. For this part of the work is the picture of a nation tormented, plundered, exhausted, crushed down to extreme misery, under the hoofs of the whole troop of centaurs in authority. The pasha himself performs in grand fashion, and each subordinate official does his part. The people have never read of the locusts, and what became of them, in Pharaoh's time; or they would look with some passionate wishes toward the Red Sea.

It is needless to say, that the term Government in this instance means nothing of theory. Nor is it a well-organized tyranny. Its chief possesses, in the exertion of an iron force of will, sufficient ascendancy to make the disordered consistence of the state work to his own purposes; but not enough to reduce it to a system, in which the parts should work together as commodiously, with as little secondary mischief, as possible, in maintaining and perfecting the one imperial mischief of a relentless despotism. Indeed it would seem that he does not care, as long as that can be maintained, what it may cost to the human mass over which it is exercised. As

a matter of feeling merely, that is nothing wonderful ; but it is somewhat strange that, in simple policy and foresight, he should not be more economical of the harassment and consumption of the living and all other materials which are to constitute his state ; and the ruin of which must render his domination worthless to him. By a rapacious monopoly, and a taxation which watches every thing that grows just in order to crop it, he extinguishes all the incentives to industry and improvement, in the agricultural interest especially, but those applied by brute force. One of the most iniquitous, and at the same time reckless, of the measures in unsparing prosecution is, that of making himself lord paramount, plainly the absolute owner, of the land, by taking it away from the proprietors, with the semblance of giving them an equivalent or compensation in pensions for life ; which he pays as long as he pleases or finds convenient ; and which at all events leave the families of the once rightful possessors consigned at last to the condition of serfs or of total destitution. He has laid his talons also on the endowments of religious and charitable institutions. His revenue is understood to amount to three millions sterling.

But the section is occupied chiefly with an account of the several courts of law, and other offices of administration. And it just tells how every thing is managed as rogues would have it ; by bribery, falsification, perjury, oppression of the weak, and collusion, as far as the respective corrupt interests of the parties will admit of it, among the strong. There is a curious detailed relation of a concerted plan to defraud a merchant's orphan daughter of her father's property. It had been brought, through all due legal formalities, to a prosperous consummation—the villains in actual possession—when it was blown up by so rare a thing as the resolute intervention of a high public officer of inflexible integrity. Another story describes an act of summary retribution, not surpassed in fantastic barbarism by any judicial transaction in the whole annals of rude tribes and times. We are sorry not to have room to insert it at full length, because the admirably graphic and dramatic effect is lost in a bare statement of the facts ; which are these : The nazir (collecting officer of a village) demanded of a poor peasant sixty riyals, equal to about thirty shillings, which he was wholly unable to pay, his sole property being a cow, which at once supported his family by her milk and ploughed his

small piece of ground. The officer seized the cow, had it cut up in sixty pieces, and summoned sixty peasants, with a command to take each a piece and pay down a riyal, the butcher receiving the head in payment for his work. Thus the required sum was realized. The ruined peasant went with his lamentable tale to the superior officer, Defterdar, of the district, who instantly ordered before him all the parties, the collector, the sixty purchasers, and the butcher. After due, but short inquisition, he ordered the butcher to serve out the collector as he had the cow, cutting the body in sixty pieces. As the cow had been sold at but half its value, he commanded each of the former purchasers to take his piece of the collector and pay two riyals; the butcher receiving, as before, the head for his trouble. Not a man, during the proceeding, had presumed to utter a syllable in remonstrance. The hundred and twenty riyals were then given to the poor peasant.

The mode of living, that is to say, the system (for so it may claim to be named) of eating and drinking, with the adjunct and supplementary luxuries, is set forth in all its apparatus, varieties, and ceremonial, as in practice in the higher classes of the city people; an affair of careful interest and study; though falling far enough short of the sumptuousness and waste of certain Christian capitals. This must always be the chief resource of combined ignorance, indolence, and wealth. The Egyptian gentry, all who can afford to have nothing to do but indulge and amuse themselves, are a lazy tribe. Nor is it said that they suffer, in any great degree, the plague and punishment of laziness in the shape of ennui. It does not appear but they get life along with tolerable complacency, between their reflections, their gossiping visits and lounges, their religious formalities, and their pipes. This last article is a favourite and inseparable companion, seen in close fellowship with the Moslem all the day long, in his hand, or placed beside him, or carried by his attendant when he walks or rides. Even the women, the ladies, are in great familiarity with it, but have a refined sort of tobacco, of which the smoke serves as a kind of perfume. Like other favourites, the pipe is made an object of vanity and a subject of decoration, the mouth-piece often costing, between material and ornamental device, from two to three pounds sterling.

The tranquillity of indolence and luxury is not so entire but that the stimulus of some bustling occasion is highly welcome.

As if for the purpose of contributing this benefit on the widest scale, the marriages of persons of any account are celebrated in a succession of public shows, processions, and racket, in most barbarian contempt of all that good taste would dictate in such an affair—if we may be allowed to apply that epithet after being reminded that, in society pretending to the most finished civilization, that transaction is sometimes profaned with proclamation, parade, and noisy hilarity. In odd contrast with this flaring and vociferous publicity, described through all its shows and changes by our author, is the circumstance that the bridegroom is not permitted to see the face of the bride, absolutely cannot know whether he shall like her or not, till the contract is affirmed, and the whole ceremonial, after several days of it, coming to an end. He is then introduced to see her without her veil; and there is a party waiting outside for an appointed sign that he is pleased or content with this first glance of what he is to be—we were unwittingly going to say—looking at for life. But no; he may rid himself of her whenever he has a mind. The facility of cutting the tie has been mentioned already; but Mr. Lane goes into ampler detail in the chapters on marriage and the harem.

The slenderness of the conjugal bond yields to the men the substantial advantage of variety and change, without the trouble and expense of polygamy, for which the Mahomedan law gives so large a privilege. The pluralists in this line are chiefly among the lower order, where, instead of incurring an expense, the man may turn the venture to a profit, by taking wives who will consent to work for him. But, taking all together, Mr. Lane thinks “that not more than one husband in twenty has two wives.” Sometimes in addition to the one, a slave is held in the combined capacity of servant and paramour. In exposing the arrangements of the harem, the author represents the condition of the inmates as not so consciously unhappy as is commonly imagined; the wretchedness incidental to mental vacuity being averted by employment in ornamental works, by much real gayety, and by the liberty, under precautionary attendance of course, of going on visits and little rides about the city. As to the husband’s vigilance, we are told that any obvious deficiency of it would be deemed by an Egyptian lady an affront, as betraying a want of due regard for her. It is needless to mention that all females, but those of the lower order, are veiled up to the eyes when they appear in public:

and in the house also, whenever there would be a chance of their being seen by any of the other sex, except the very few who are privileged by relationship. What a degraded estimate of half the race of rational creatures is implied in this whole system of precaution, preclusion, and concealment !

The description of the indolent and voluptuous life of the higher classes, inhabiting the metropolis and great towns, stands in flagrant contrast with the condition of those at the bottom of the scale ; especially the peasantry, who are sustained in their ill-rewarded toils by a diet on which we may wonder how they can preserve strength to labour at all, or even to live. But how earnestly this poor lot of existence is clung to in preference to the military service, may be seen in the expedients employed by parents to save their sons from that destination.

It is fortunate for these Moslems not to have a great variety of subjects to study ; for the tax on their time and faculties for the complete mastery, in knowledge and practice, of the code alone of salutations, compliments, and other verbal civilities, would leave little chance for their proficiency in other learning. There are settled classical forms of speech for all manner of social occasions and incidents, even down to that of yawning ; on which occurrence the true believer is to apply the back of his left hand to his mouth, and say, "I seek refuge with God from Satan the accursed." The ungraceful act, however, is rather to be avoided as much as may be ; and for a much better reason than any thing against it on the score of grace or politeness ; "for it is believed that the devil is in the habit of leaping into a gaping mouth." It is not stated whether that incursion be in any degree attracted by the circumstance that the Egyptian mouth is always filled with smoke. "The ordinary set compliments in use in Egyptian society," says Mr. Lane, "are so numerous, that a dozen pages of this work would not suffice for the mention of those which may be heard almost every day." Very inconvenient and onerous as this appears in one view, it is commodious in another, as saving the trouble of any strain on the inventive faculty.

The void of knowledge is occupied by an ample order and disorder of superstitions, to the greater portion of mankind a more acceptable mental possession ; inasmuch as it is a thing far more easy and of more lively excitement to indulge the imagination than to exercise the understanding. Superstition,

besides, has the advantage over sober truth of bringing its false creations into more intimate contact with the passions of hope and fear, especially the latter—except in the case of persons of the most extraordinary piety. Nay, it presses closer on the mind than all the objects of the senses, and in many instances constitutes the impressive force of those very objects. For example, our author represents the belief of these Islamites in *Ginn* (Genii) as subjecting them to a perpetual haunting of their effective good or evil (but especially evil) intervention, in all times and places, and in every thing they do. These invisible agents, some of them “true believers,” some of them malignant infidels, denominated *Effreets*, and being the more powerful order, are deemed to pervade the earth and the sky, and to be ready to take offence at the most common actions of life; so that it is prudent to exclaim or mutter, “Destoor,” that is, “Permission,” by way of deprecation, on letting a bucket down into a well, lighting a fire, or throwing water on the ground. They are the actuating spirits of some of the dangerous commotions of the elements, such as the whirlwinds of sand. Against the *ginee* approaching in that fashion, the most approved charm is to bawl out, “Iron, thou unlucky!” as the genii are supposed to have a great dread of that metal. Some of them are believed to assume, occasionally or constantly, the form of dogs, cats, or other brutes; and among a number of characteristic anecdotes is the story of what one of the most illuminated sages of the country, recently deceased, who had written several works on various sciences, used to relate (if seriously, which is implied) of his attendant *ginee* in the person of a cat; evincing a debility or perversion of intellect almost incredible.

The veneration among the Mahomedans for *idiots* is better accounted for than we had imagined; the case being that “the mind of the idiot is (literally) in heaven, while his grosser part mingles among ordinary mortals; consequently he is considered an especial favourite of heaven.” The order of persons holding the repute of *saints* forfeit none of their respect by taking a practical dispensation from the rules of morality, decency, and religion. At the head of them is a personage of peculiar and pre-eminent sanctity, denominated *Ckooib*; who is believed to be here, or to be there, but nobody can certainly tell where; for he is never seen so as to be recognised at any of the stations supposed to be favoured with

his presence. There is so strong a presumption of his being ensconced behind the constantly turned-back half of one of the city gates, that

“Numbers of persons afflicted with the headache drive a nail into the door to charm away the pain; and many sufferers from the toothache extract a tooth, and insert it in a crevice of the door, or fix it in some other way, to insure their not being attacked again by the same melody. Some curious individuals often try to peep behind the door, in the vain hope of catching a glimpse of the Ckootb, should he happen to be there, and not at the moment invisible. He is believed to transport himself from Mecca to Cairo in an instant, and also from any one place to another. He wanders throughout the whole world, among persons of every religion, whose appearance, dress, and language he assumes: and distributes to mankind, chiefly through the subordinate *welees* (saints) evils and blessings, the awards of destiny.”

There is a notion among many that the ckootbs are appointed in succession by Elijah, whom they consider as the Ckootb of his time, and acknowledge that he never died. Some amusingly ridiculous stories relating to the powers, vocations, and habits of the welees are recited by Mr. Lane, who says they are believed by persons who, in many respects, evince good sense; and that to laugh, or express discredit, would give great offence.

The coveted honour of being reckoned among the welees, or saints, is conceded, in repute, to a few only of a numerous and less sacred order, the *Durweeshes* (dervises); who still are made of some better material than ordinary mortals; have rites of initiation; some not very defined connexion with religious offices; and are classed under four distinctive denominations. Some of them figure in the exercise of repeating the name of Allah, with a few other words interjected, as long as the vocal organs can sustain the task; “accompanying their ejaculations or chants with a motion of the head, or of the whole body, or of the arms. From long habit they are able to continue these exercises for a surprising length of time without intermission.” Some of them excel in mountebank feats, of thrusting iron spikes into their bodies, eating glass or burning coals, and live serpents. But the majority seem to employ themselves chiefly in the more ordinary, honest, and useful occupations. On some public occasions the author witnessed the most ambitious exploits of the fine performers. The dancing and whirling exhibition does not appear to have equalled what is described as seen in Constantinople. But

that of fire-eating with impunity was a more wonder-making spectacle than any feats of agility could have been.

But something much more strange than this is done in Egypt, and probably no where else. Mr. Lane had heard from English residents in Cairo such accounts of a modern Jannes or Jambres that it would have evinced an inexcusable want of curiosity not to seek an interview. There was introduced to him a fine-looking man, affable and unaffected in his conversation, who had no reluctance or fear to put his powers to the test before the most shrewd or suspicious inspector. The preparatory ceremony was to write on a paper in Arabic (which he readily showed to Mr. Lane, who has given a translation) an invocation to two *genii*, his "familiar spirits," named *Turshoon* and *Turyooshoon*.* This was cut in slips, which were successively thrown together with some incense, on the fire in a chafing-dish, while the process of incantation was going on, in an indistinct muttering by the magician—not, to be sure, a very imposing kind of spell, and more adapted to excite suspicion than create credulity. It was necessary there should be an intermediate person between him and the inquisitive observer. And this might be "a boy, not arrived at puberty, a virgin, a black female slave, or a pregnant woman;" a rule of fitness seemingly odd and arbitrary enough. A boy was brought in from the street, by a chance selection, made by Mr. Lane himself, from a number who were returning from a manufactory. He is very particular and positive in asserting that there was not, and could not be, any manner of collusion. A reed-pen and ink were supplied by Mr. Lane himself (as the paper for the charm and the scissors for cutting it had also been) at the request of the magician; who then drew "a magic square" in the palm of the boy's hand, with Arabic numerals marked on its margin, and a blot of ink, less than a sixpence, in the middle. So far in sight of Mr. Lane, who has given the diagram on his page; what might come next was not to be seen by him, but described by the boy. The spot of ink was to become the ground, or scene, or mirror, of the objects required to appear. The room being filled with smoke of the incense, the magician interrupted his muttering to ask the boy whether he saw any

* In a note Mr. Lane says, "He professed to me that his wonders were effected by the agency of *good* spirits; but to others he has said the reverse; that his magic is satanic."

thing, and was answered, "no;" but soon after, with signs of fear, the boy said, "I see a man sweeping the ground." He was then directed to call, in succession, for a long series of spectacles, some of them consisting of a variety of objects and movements; and he described them distinctly, in form, colour, number, and change of action, in such prompt, plain manner, as to leave no doubt that they were actually before his eyes. One example may suffice:

"The boy was directed to say, 'Bring the sultan's tent, and pitch it.' This he did; and in about a minute after, he said, 'Some men have brought the tent; a large green tent; they are pitching it;' and presently he added, 'They have set it up' 'Now,' said the magician, 'order the soldiers to come and pitch their camp around the tent of the sultan.' The boy did so; and immediately said, 'I see a great many soldiers with the tents; they have pitched the tents.' He was then told to order that the soldiers should be drawn up in ranks; and he presently said that he saw them thus arranged."—*Ib.* p. 353.

But if it might be suspected that all this, however inexplicable, was merely a predetermined show of phantasmagoria, an adjusted course of spectral illusion, the magician presently went beyond any conceivable reach of such an artifice.

"He now addressed himself to me; and asked me if I wished the boy to see any person absent or dead. I named Lord Nelson; of whom the boy had evidently never heard; for it was with much difficulty that he pronounced the name, after several trials. The magician desired the boy to say to the sultan, 'My master salutes thee, and desires thee to bring Lord Nelson; bring him before my eyes that I may see him, speedily.' The boy then said so, and almost immediately added, 'A messenger is gone, and has returned, and brought a man dressed in a black suit of European clothes. The man has lost his left arm.' He then paused for a moment or two; and, looking more intently, and more closely, into the ink, he said, 'No; he has not lost his left arm, but it is placed to his breast.' This correction made his description more striking than it had been without it; since Lord Nelson generally had his empty sleeve attached to the breast of his coat; but it was the right arm that he had lost. Without saying that I suspected the boy had made a mistake, I asked the magician whether the objects appeared in the ink as if actually before the eyes, or as if in a glass which makes the right appear as the left. He answered that they appeared as if in a mirror. This rendered the boy's description faultless."

The author mentions in a note that the term here translated *black* is equally applied by the Egyptians to *dark blue*.

Mr. Lane next called for a native Egyptian of his acquaintance, then and during many years before residing in England,

wearing the European dress, and who had, at the time of Mr. Lane's going to Egypt, been long confined to his bed by illness.

“I thought that his name, one not very uncommon in Egypt, might make the boy describe him incorrectly; though another boy, on the former visit of the magician, had described this same person as wearing a European dress, like that in which I last saw him. In the present case the boy said, ‘Here is a man brought on a kind of bier, wrapped up in a sheet.’ This description would suit, supposing the person to be still confined to his bed, or if dead. The boy described his face as covered; and was told to order that it should be uncovered. This he did; and then said, ‘His face is pale; and he has mustaches, but no beard;’ which was correct.”

Several other persons were named, but the boy's description was "imperfect, though not altogether incorrect ; as if his eyes were becoming gradually dim." Another boy said he could see nothing ; the magician said he was

He was somewhat disappointed, be-
cause of what had been witnessed,
of the friends and countrymen,
We wish that, to
illustration, he
of those instances, with

"On one occasion, and this nothing more than a description of his own father, of whom I am assured that no one could be so ignorant as to have any knowledge. The person, however, having called by name the person alluded to, described him in a Frank dress of broad cloth, with a hat placed to his head, wearing spectacles, and with one hand on his forehead, and the other raised behind him, as if he were stepping down from a seat. The description was exactly true in every respect, and the position of the hand was occasioned by an almost constant habit, and that of the foot or leg by a stiff knee, caused by a fall from a horse, in hunting. I am assured that on this occasion the boy acted with the most perfect truth, and person and thing called for. On another occasion, I had some persons described with the most minute correctness, both as to person and dress, and I might add several other cases in which the magistrates were enabled to punish in the sober minds of Englishmen of my acquaintance."—p. 156.

Now these statements being assumed as accurately true to matter of fact—and the testimony appears to be such as to pre-

clude all doubt—what are we to think of the art or power which so prodigiously surpasses all known resources of mechanical ingenuity and physical science? Mr. Lane declines to adventure an opinion, resigning the affair to impenetrable mystery. But there will be no lack of confidence to pronounce, and the authority so pronouncing will assume the name and tone of philosophy, that there was nothing more in the whole matter than artful contrivance? that there was no intervention of an intelligent agency extraneous to that of the immediate ostensible agent. But can this assumption be made on any other ground than a prior general assumption that there is no such preternatural intervention in the system of the world? But how to *know* that there is not? The negative decision, pronounced in confident ignorance, is a conceited impertinence, which ought to be rebuked by that philosophy whose oracles it is affecting to utter. For what any man knows, or can know, there may be such intervention. That it is not incompatible with the constitution of the world, is an unquestionable fact with the unsophisticated believers in the sacred records. And not a few occurrences in later history have totally defied every attempt at explanation by any other way.

And now take the facts before us, as they are given by Mr. Lane. First, those that may be seen in the day-time, without concert, without burning and smoke of incense, and on a ground in all appearance unfit, to the spectators, there were brought, not a thing like imagery (which, however, some suppose that the excited state of the young men, under the influence of perfumes and strange rites might be able to create,) but a series of distinct scenes of persons and transactions, each remaining long enough to be plainly described, but succeeded, at the interval of a few moments by another, different and also of precise delineation. It is easy to fling off the difficulty by saying it was all done by some juggling device.—*This* cheap philosophy may be quietly put aside. But let the greatest adept in all that real philosophers know of science and art point out an ascertained principle in nature, by the action of which he deliberately believes that he, or any philosopher, can—nay, rather, by which the philosopher shall practically prove that he can—at his mere will, as unaided by

optical apparatus as the Egyptian, command the elements into the sudden formation of such a series of images, rapidly but definitely presented to the eyes, or can impart to the eyes themselves the power of instantaneously shaping them. But the philosopher!—the thing was done by a person whose philosophical qualifications our adept would despise.

But next the stronger cases : the statement is, that, immediately on being called for, there were presented the images of persons, unknown to the Magus, far absent, or dead, in conspicuous portraiture, with various and very particular marks of correspondence to what was known of those persons by the challengers of his mysterious faculty. Now put it to any rational man, who has not attained the wisdom of an *a priori* rejection of the supernatural, whether he can believe that such an effect was within the competence of some curious art, or some resource of science, in the possession of the unschooled Mahomedan ; or within the competence of any art or science in the possession of any man in the world. If the professor of science shall think so, he will do well to go and seek the Egyptian, acknowledge his superiority to all the learned world, and solicit to be admitted into the inner recesses of the temple of knowledge.

We are well enough aware that we are exposing ourselves to ridicule by these observations. But what signifies the ridicule of men whose pride turns exactly on their ignorance ; who deride the idea of any preternatural intervention when their utmost faculty cannot reach to apprehend the very possibility of effects which are placed before them as facts ? It would be amusing to see the shifts to be resorted to in this total ignorance on the one hand, to authorize a confident affirmation of certainty on the other. Of course any thing rather than admit the occasional activity on earth of any other actors than man and what is called nature.

In a kind of summary estimate of the Egyptian character, the author observes that it is considered among the Moslems as the highest honour to be religious. Hence no small measure of Pharisaism and hypocrisy. Hence also the profane habit of ejaculating the name of the Supreme Being on all manner of occasions, even the most trifling or indecent. The only real reverence seems to be for the prophet, for whom the feeling is idolatrous. His name is held so sacred that the pasha has been reproached for the impiety of having it, as

being one of his own names, branded on his horses and camels. Their regard for the sanctity of the Koran is manifested in every imaginable way, except that of conformity to what there may be of most value in its precepts. There are but few, Mr. Lane thinks, who are really unbelievers. There is no disposition now to make converts; they say "the number of the faithful is decreed by God, and no act of man can increase or diminish it." The belief in predestination has the effect, in men, of producing a wonderful degree of resignation, or apathy, in all distresses and calamities, and in the approach to death. Not so, he says, with the women, who give vent to their grief in the most extravagant cries and shrieks; whether because they are not taught the doctrine, or will not believe it, or cannot understand what consolation it is to be told that misfortune which must be, must be, is not said. There is much benevolence and charity to the poor; this, however, is on a calculation of being paid, and overpaid, for it elsewhere. Generosity and cupidity are oddly combined, a disposition to overreach and extort, with a readiness to afford relief in distress. A consequence of the latter is a superabundant swarm of beggars. In spite of the formidable penalties to female infidelity, there is a strong propensity to licentious intrigue. Several curious stories are related of illicit adventures, involving plenty of adroitness, ludicrous incident, hazard, and revenge. The women, while on the one hand kept under rigid restriction and guardianship, are on the other systematically, and Mr. Lane says, even intentionally, incited to a voluptuous disposition, by the spectacle of lascivious dances, and the hearing, screened from sight by lattices, of immoral songs and tales. The humanity of the people, toward both human beings and brutes, is asserted by him to have suffered a great deterioration since his former visit to the country; acts and habits of cruelty, to animals especially, having now become obtrusively offensive, and robberies and murders being of much more common occurrence. "The increased severity of the government seems, as might be expected, to have engendered tyranny, and an increase of every crime, in the people."

The account of the popular amusements, many of them frivolous, and some worse, goes, however, into a very long description of the more mental one of listening to the recital of romances, by men who make it their profession, and qualify

themselves by a lively and dramatic manner of narrating. The author has sketched out the course of surprising adventures through several of the eventful and fantastic stories, reminding us of the Arabian Nights. They will tend to retain something of the imaginative and poetic, among a people whom so many circumstances have operated to reduce to a depressed, coarse, and slavishly fixed condition, so much in contrast to the wild and boundless freedom of the Arabs. The monotony of life is relieved at intervals by the annual return of several great festivals, especially that which distinguishes the beginning of the Mahomedan year, and that which celebrates the birth of the prophet. But the most lively excitement seems to be that occasioned by the return of the caravan of pilgrims from Mecca. The author has described much at large, and in a very picturesque manner, the signs of eager expectation, the mingled joy and apprehension at the arrival of the intelligence and the precursors of its near approach; the rush of the inhabitants out of the city to meet their friends, or to see whether they and their friends are ever to meet; the delight of some on receiving them back, and the passionate grief of others, chiefly the women, on finding that those they inquired for had been arrested by death, or (the year in which the description was written) the hardly less disaster of the seizure of a thousand of them for the army. There are passed in view the varied appearances of the masses and groups as they came on; the pompous procession of a kind of ark or chest, containing nothing, but considered as an emblem of royalty, always accompanying the caravan, by a custom perpetuated on the strength of a story of a Queen of Egypt, who, many centuries since, had travelled in such a vehicle; and lastly, the excitement and bustle in the city, on such a new influx of holiness as these pilgrims had brought back from the birth-place and tomb of the prophet.

But here a consideration of the disproportionate space we have already occupied, compels us to make an abrupt conclusion, leaving a large portion of the work for the curiosity of indefatigable readers. We are so far from the end of the Hercynian forest, that we have nothing for it but to make a resolute bolt sideways to get clear. There remain the subjects of trades, games, music, festivals, funeral rites, measures, weights, and moneys, female ornaments, Jews, Copts, late in-

novations, and various others. We cannot enough admire the untiring and unlimited inquisitiveness, accurate observation, and patience of detail, which have wrought out so complete a panorama of the nation.

There is one observation which it would hardly be right to forego. It respects the *price* at which our author obtained a knowledge of some things not ordinarily accessible to the inspection or inquiries of the Christian *djowrs*. We shall not impute to him an indifference to the question of what is the true religion; but we think the *accommodation* in which he seems to have habitually allowed himself, to the extent sometimes of a direct practical conformity to the prescribed formalities of Mahomedism, was not compatible with fidelity to the religion with which that hateful imposture is at mortal enmity.

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